



NINETEENTH CENTURY  
ENGLAND



By ROBERT M. RAYNER, B.A.

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## PREFACE

THIS book is an attempt to meet a want I have long felt in my own teaching: that of a book for pupils in the higher forms of Public and Secondary Schools, to serve as an historical introduction to the political and social circumstances of their country and their age. It also embodies a conviction that the study of history gains enormously in significance and value when its facts are focussed around centres of interest; for too close an adherence to chronology hinders and confuses that interpretative process which is its most stimulating aspect. Each chapter therefore deals with a definite subject, and is limited to the amount that can be read in twenty, or twenty-five minutes, leaving the rest of the lesson for explanation and discussion. The chronological background has been maintained by charts, by marginal dates, and by cross-references to contemporary events dealt with elsewhere in the book. For the design of these charts, and the verification of the references, I am much indebted to my pupils, A. P. Drinkwater and J. O. M. Blatch, of Clayesmore School.

R.M.R.

May 1927.





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# NINETEENTH CENTURY ENGLAND

## CHAPTER I

### The Economic Revolution

<sup>23</sup> A time there was, ere England's griefs began,  
When every rood of land maintained its man."  
GOLDSMITH.

THERE are periods in history when it seems as if a great chasm had opened, separating all that went before from all that came after. Forces that have long been gathering strength unnoticed are suddenly released, and in a little while they seem to create a new heaven and a new earth. New ideas about the world and man's place in it take possession of men's minds, their thoughts take on a new complexion, and their lives begin to run in fresh channels. Often the people living through these critical epochs are but dimly conscious of the nature and meaning of the changes; only in the light of subsequent developments can we understand them. One such cataclysm was the overrunning of the Roman Empire by the barbarians which marked the beginning of what we call the Middle Ages; another was the Renaissance which marked the close of that period.

The world in which we live to-day was brought into existence by a similar upheaval, which took place towards the end of the eighteenth century. It had two aspects, Economic and Political. The Economic or Industrial Revolution was a change in the method of producing and distributing food, clothing, and the other necessities of life. The Political Revolution was a new way of looking at men's relationships with each other and with the governments which regulate their lives and actions. The first of these revolutions began in England; the second in France.

They have since spread to every country of the habitable globe, and they have interacted in a thousand ways. We shall not be able to understand modern history, of which they are the warp and woof, without some preliminary study of their nature and origin.

It is with the former that we shall deal in this chapter.

§ 1. "The Old Order Changeth" (a) In Industry.—In the days before this revolution, nine-tenths of the population of Britain (as of all other countries) lived in villages. There were a few market-towns, to and from which goods were taken on pack-horses; otherwise the lack of transport facilities compelled these villages to be self-supplying. This stage of civilisation had gone on for so long that it appeared to be the only possible order of things—as permanent as breathing or the law of gravitation. Bristol was the only town besides London with as many as 25,000 inhabitants, and the great majority of the people supported themselves by agriculture. Their cultivation of the soil provided them with food: and most of their clothing was the work of their own hands also, for spinning and weaving were domestic occupations, carried on for the most part in cottage homes, in the intervals of labour in the field. Large farms were rare, and factories, in the modern sense of the word, hardly existed at all. Broadly speaking, the people of Britain consumed the produce of their own labour, and "every rood of land maintained its man." International trade was almost confined to articles of luxury.

This was still the outward appearance of the economic organisation of Britain in the middle of the eighteenth century, but causes had for many years been undermining it. They may be traced back to the adventurous Renaissance spirit which drove men over the seas to discover the New World and to open trade relationships with the old civilisations of Asia. Luxuries such as silks and spices and tobacco and sugar began to be imported; and the taste for such things grew by what it fed on. Those from whom these articles were obtained did not give them for nothing—they wanted their own needs satisfied in return. Thus was stimulated the production of commodities for export, and the most obvious form for these to take was woven fabrics. For two hundred years the foreign trade of the country developed slowly along these lines; but towards the middle of the eighteenth

century its advance was greatly accelerated by the coincidence that this was the period when the colonisation of Carolina and Georgia was proceeding most rapidly, and also the period when the operations of the East India Company were expanding under the leadership of Clive. Here was an unlimited source for the supply of the raw material of cotton, and an unlimited market for cotton cloth. The wits of men were sharpened by the prospect of gain, and improved methods of spinning and weaving were invented in rapid succession.

But machine-industry was something quite beyond the capacity of the hand-loom weaver in his cottage. Machines were expensive in themselves, they had to be housed in large buildings, and they had to be driven by mechanical power. The cottager lived his simple life from hand to mouth: he provided himself and his family with food and clothing, but very little money passed through his hands. The new circumstances required some one with the necessary funds to set up machinery and to provide it with large quantities of the raw material—that is to say, a *Capitalist*. To tend this machinery he would need to hire persons whom he must support (by wages) while the process of manufacture was going on—that is to say, *Labourers*. Hitherto the cottager had mostly supplied the very limited capital required to get his hand-loom working, and had also supplied the labour, in the persons of himself and his family. Henceforth these functions were more and more separated.

Hence arose a whole series of problems with which our ancestors were not troubled, and for which we have not even yet found an adequate solution: the relationship between these two classes of persons, and the methods by which the share of each in the profits derived from the production are to be apportioned.

§ 2. “The Old Order Changeth”(b) In Agriculture.—Thus there grew up an ever-increasing class living congregated near the mills whose machinery they tended. How were they to be fed? The cottager had tilled the land as well as woven the cloth, but the mill hand produced no foodstuffs at all—he was a man of one occupation.

Here we see the root cause of another great change. Hitherto there had been no impulse to improve agricultural methods, for there would have been nobody to consume any extra produce that might have been extracted from the land; but henceforth the rapidly growing towns provided an insistent demand for

food supplies. If some means could be found to make every rood of land maintain not only its own man but another man as well, a source of profit hitherto untapped would be available for the more active and intelligent of the landowners. They began to give their attention to such matters as manuring and draining, and the rotation of crops, and improving the breed of sheep and cattle. But there was one great obstacle to such enterprises—the strange and antiquated method in which the land was apportioned to those who held it and tilled it.

By the existing system much of the land was held “in common” by all the inhabitants of a village, and was used for the pasture of their cows and pigs, and for the cutting of their winter fuel; and in many districts, especially in the rich farming counties of the south-east, the arable land was divided into long narrow strips separated not by hedges but by grass “balks.” This arrangement had worked well enough so long as “subsistence agriculture” was the object, and there had been no prospect of profit from scientific methods. Now, however, that there was a market for surplus produce, “improving” landlords began to find that it hampered all their efforts to make their land profitable. Drainage schemes and cross-ploughing could not be carried out while the land was held in a number of isolated strips. Moreover, now that the price of corn had risen, much of the common land which had hitherto been too poor in quality to repay cultivation could be profitably brought under the plough. So the gentry began to desire to exchange their strips for compact holdings which would lend themselves to high farming, and at the same time to cast covetous eyes on the common land of the neighbourhood.

They therefore consulted their lawyers and promoted private Acts of Parliament called “Enclosure Bills.” Thousands of these were passed during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries by a Parliament which itself consisted almost exclusively of landlords and their dependants, who would be entirely in sympathy with such projects. An Enclosure Act usually provided for the small tenants getting their shares in the new apportionment of the village lands, but the promoters of the scheme often exploited their superior power and knowledge to get the best of the bargain. Moreover, the Act usually required that each tenant should pay a share of the cost of legislation, and of fencing his new holding. When, as often happened, he

could not find the money to do this, he was compelled to sell out to the big landowner.

And what should we expect him to do with the money thus acquired? Some of the best men doubtless emigrated; not a few of the keenest and most intelligent moved into the growing towns and used the money to start mills and foundries, and become capitalists. But the great majority just squandered it at the village inn, and in a few months found themselves without money, without rights, without land, and without a place in society except that of wage slaves—whether in the towns as mill hands, or in the country as farm labourers.

§ 3. Effects.—So much for the causes of the Economic Revolution; let us now consider its consequences.

First of all, Britain ceased to be self-supplying. The industrial population increased very rapidly, and it soon became impossible to feed these teeming millions on food grown within the country itself, despite improved methods. Moreover, any country which produces goods for export must, by inexorable economic law, import other goods in exchange; otherwise the countries which require its products will not be able to pay for them, since international trade is only a rather complicated form of barter. Thus Britain became more and more dependent on other countries for many of the necessities of civilised life, including corn.

As a corollary of this, agriculture ceased to be the usual and characteristic occupation of the nation. It was long before this was realised, and for another century men went on claiming that the farmer should have special privileges, because he was “the backbone of the country”; but the fact remains that the typical Englishman of 1750 lived in the country and tilled the soil, while the typical Englishman of 1850 was, as he is to-day, a town dweller, employed in some form of industry or trade.

An even more far-reaching effect was the establishment of Capitalism. Whereas in the old days the yeoman farmer had owned the land he tilled and the appliances he tilled it with, in the new age the land has fallen more and more into the hands of capitalist farmers, who do not work it with their own hands, but pay wages to labourers and take all the profits. A parallel change took place in the organisation of industry. Instead of the worker buying the raw material, working on it in his own cottage with his own appliances, and then taking it to the market to sell or



exchange, under the new system the mill and the machinery and the raw material all belong to capitalist manufacturers, who pay wages to "hands" to perform the actual labour.

Another striking result of the Revolution was the shifting of the balance of population from the south of England to the north, and from the agricultural districts to the coalfields. When steam-power began to be used to drive machinery, it was natural that mills should be built close to the necessary fuel.

Lastly, no indirect result of the Revolution had such a profound effect on world history as the advance it caused in facilities for locomotion. So long as bad roads were merely a source of inconvenience men contented themselves with grumbling at them; but when they proved a hindrance to getting rich a more powerful and effective motive for improving matters came into play. Brindley's canals and Telford's metalled roads were but typical of many such improvements towards the end of the eighteenth century. Moreover, the impulse was too strong to stop here: within a few years there were far more striking developments. People had hardly had time to get used to barges on canals and "flying coaches" on hard roads, when both were superseded by railway trains.

§ 4. Profit . . .—The Industrial Revolution was the result of forces and impulses over which man has little control; and those who lived in the midst of the change could not see clearly what it was that was happening, or what its results would be. Nevertheless, it is possible for us in our later day to form some estimate of what was gained and lost by it, and in what respects we are better or worse off than our ancestors who lived on the other side of this watershed of history.

Let us first count our gains. The simple village life of the old days was stagnant, almost bovine. People who live in scattered hamlets, shut off from communication with all but their immediate neighbours, will make little advance in civilisation or refinement. It is where men are congregated together that the contact of mind with mind is fruitful of ideas and aspirations. The arts by which man gains control over the forces of Nature, and learns to use them for the enhancement of his own comfort and convenience, have made far more advance during the last century than during the whole of recorded time before.

Again, production on a large scale is far more economical of time than the petty fiddling about which went on in the old days.

If a machine tended by one man can be made to do the work that formerly had to be done by a hundred, then ninety-nine of them will be set free to contribute in some other way to the common wealth.

There was another benefit conferred by the Revolution, more temporary in its immediate effects, but of vital importance at the time. The country was engaged in a great struggle with Napoleon Bonaparte. Had it been worsted in that struggle its subsequent history would have been far less happy, and far less useful to the cause of humanity. Its ultimate success was due more than to any other cause to the great resources in material wealth which it had developed from these new industries, though neither Bonaparte nor the rulers of Britain realised this at the time.

§ 5. . . . and Loss.—Let us now glance at the other side of the picture. These advantages had to be purchased at a price, and that price was the health and happiness of generations of our fellow-countrymen. The country dweller may be unprogressive and ignorant, but he is generally healthy and happy. In the old days he had to work very hard and to live on very coarse fare, often in an insanitary hovel ; but outside the hovel there was the fresh air, and he was to some extent his own master. The squire took a personal interest in his worldly welfare, and the parson in his spiritual. But in the new towns the worker lived from morning to night in the steamy atmosphere of a mill, and from night to morning in a disgusting rookery. Smoke shut out the light of the sun ; all his surroundings were hideous and sordid. In place of the friendly if patronising squire there was now only a mill-owner, to whom he was personally unknown, and whose attitude towards him was that of a task-master. There had come into existence a new force—a force that has had a disastrous effect on the subsequent development of the human race, has soured the relationship between man and man, and has nullified the teachings of Christianity—the force of *competition*. It drove the capitalist, engaged in a deadly struggle for existence with other capitalists, to get the last ounce of work out of his “hands” that flesh and blood could endure, for as low a wage as they could be compelled to accept ; and it drove the ever-increasing hordes of workers, who had to find employment or die of hunger, to put up with almost any conditions of labour that were offered to them. By the interplay of these two

aspects of the new force, the standard of living was depressed until the difference between life in a Lancashire cotton mill and life on the plantation where the raw material was produced was almost entirely in favour of the negroes: they worked in the open air, and their masters were compelled for the sake of their own pockets to keep them alive and well, whereas the mill-owner could always get plenty more labour without any initial outlay at all.

In the countryside matters were much the same. Wages fell until the agricultural labourer could not by any contrivance live on them. Six or seven shillings a week was quite a usual wage at a time when bread was double its present price. Thus, however hard he worked, however much he strove to preserve his self-respect and self-dependence, he was compelled to apply for relief from the poor rate or die of starvation, and see his wife and children die too.

§ 6. *The New Problems.*—Was it really necessary that the advantages in wealth and comfort which man has derived from the Economic Revolution should have been purchased at such a price?

The fact is that new conditions of life gave rise to a whole series of problems which quite took men by surprise, and it was only after they had been taught by long and bitter experience that they began to find solutions for them. The laws and institutions of the country had grown up in a state of society which no longer existed, and they left quite untouched the difficulties of the new age. For instance, there was no law to compel the capitalist farmer to pay his labourers sufficient wages to keep body and soul together while at work: hitherto everybody had been able to provide for himself. There was no law to prevent children being exploited by being forced to work in factories for fourteen hours a day: hitherto there had been no factories for them to work in. There was no law to prevent a "jerry-builder" from running up a row of hovels over an open ditch to save himself the expense of digging out the cellars: hitherto there would have been nobody to live in the hovels when they were built.

For half a century after the Industrial Revolution had begun to make headway no serious attempt was made to deal with these difficulties and to right these wrongs; and this was the main cause of the sufferings of the working classes, and of their blind

## The Economic Revolution

9

struggles which cast such a gloom over the social history of the first half of the nineteenth century. The class hatred which sprang up in those dark days has persisted ever since, and it is even to-day the greatest obstacle to our success in the art of living together.

Here naturally arises the question—Why were not the laws forthwith amended? We will try to find an answer to that question in the next two chapters.

### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Why was England the first country in which the Industrial Revolution took effect?
2. What advantages did England gain over other countries by her lead in this matter?
3. Write an account (as if a chapter from a novel) of the "enclosing" of a parish.
4. Explain the exact significance of the following terms: (a) "Economics"; (b) "Yeoman-farmer"; (c) "Enclosure Act"; (d) "Capitalism."

## CHAPTER II

### The Political Revolution

“A man’s a man, for a’ that.”—BURNS.

THE political revolution which took place towards the end of the eighteenth century acted in conjunction with the economic revolution we have just been discussing to divert the whole course of human history. Whereas the economic revolution first took shape in Britain, the political revolution had its origin in France, and we often speak of it as “The French Revolution”; but when we use this phrase we mean something far deeper and wider than the events which took place in that country between the years 1789 and 1799. It was a complete change in the outlook of men towards the powers and problems of government, and towards the relationship of the individual to the community as a whole. Certainly, these principles were already recognised in the recently formed United States of America, but it was their development in France that focussed the attention of the world, and it was from France that they spread over Europe, and from Europe to the uttermost parts of the earth.

§ 7. What the Political Revolution was.—The “French Revolution” put three new conceptions into the minds of men.

The first of these was Social Equality. We do not to-day recognise the existence of a separate caste who have by birth a right to monopolise the powers of government, or to have special privileges in the eyes of the law, or to have social privileges to which none outside the charmed circle can aspire. There was such a class flourishing in every country of Europe before the Revolution; but to-day, although a certain consideration still attaches to noble birth, it has hardly a remnant of political power, nor can any individual claim exemption from the duties and

obligations of citizenship on such grounds. It is a boast with us that a boy of the humblest origin can rise to whatever rank in the professions his talents fit him for, and can attain to the highest offices of State, by his own character and exertions. Such an idea would have shocked and disgusted our ancestors, to whom the necessity for a "ruling class" appeared to be axiomatic, and, broadly speaking, we may say that our modern ideal of "equality of opportunity" had its origin in the revolutionary phrase, "*La carrière ouverte aux talents*."

The second revolutionary principle was Political Democracy. We claim nowadays that every citizen has a natural right to a share in managing the affairs of his country; and particularly to a voice, however indirect, in the raising and spending of the taxes he is called upon to pay. Under the modern system of parliamentary government—which prevails in some form or other in every civilised country of the world—it is impossible for any man or set of men to make or administer the laws for long without the support of a majority of its citizens. This principle is clearly an outcome of the Revolution. It was not unheard of in ancient Greece and Rome, and some historians have found its origin in the institutions of primitive Teutonic tribes, but in its modern form it did not exist (except in the United States) before the nineteenth century. Certainly, Britain had had a Parliament for centuries, but, as we shall see in the next chapter, it was not really representative of the people as a whole.

The third revolutionary principle was Nationality. We are accustomed in these days to the idea that the Nation and the State should coincide. A people of the same race and speech and traditions wants to have its own government and laws, and to be a separate unit amongst other peoples. It will not, in the long run, allow itself to be regarded as the property of a potentate, or of a number of potentates, to be divided or ceded according to their personal will or their family interests. This spirit of nationality, of which the modern development is expressed in the phrase, "*The Self-Determination of Peoples*," existed in Britain long before the French Revolution, but there was hardly any conscious feeling of the sort in any other people in Europe, or even in the United States. The force which brought it into existence was rather Bonapartism than the Revolution itself, but Napoleon always claimed that the Empire was the natural and necessary outcome of the overthrow of the Old Régime;

so that we may safely say that, if Nationalism was not the child of the Revolution, it was its grandchild.

§ 8. Why did the Revolution come to a Head first in France?—In every country of Europe—but particularly in France—the mouldering relics of the Feudal System still lingered on, long after it had ceased to be a real organisation of society. In every country of Europe—but particularly in France—a struggle had taken place between the sovereign and his vassals for political power. In every country of Europe—but particularly in France—the victorious party in this struggle had been the monarch, and he had thus been able to concentrate in his own hands all the functions of government—functions which, in the growing complication of civilised life, he was quite unable to perform efficiently. In every country of Europe—but particularly in France—there was growing up an active and intelligent middle class, consisting of professional men and merchants, who were rigidly excluded from all political power and all social privilege, but who were becoming more and more impatient of these outworn pretensions and paralysing restrictions.

In the Middle Ages, when Feudalism still retained its vitality, the French nobles had fulfilled duties as well as enjoyed privileges; but after its decay, Louis XI and Richelieu and Louis XIV had step by step consolidated all the lands of France under one centralised government, over which the King and his Council held control. The nobles had been bribed into acquiescence in the loss of their independence by being confirmed in their privileges, and since these privileges were all that now marked the distinction between themselves and the common herd, they naturally made the most of them. The aristocracy became a narrow and exclusive caste whose only function in society was to consume the good things produced by the labour of others. They monopolised the higher ranks in the Army and the Church; they alone might indulge in field sports; they cherished all manner of out-of-date feudal rights to exact dues from the people; above all, they were exempt from all the more burdensome taxes.

Obviously this was a highly artificial form of civilisation. If the unprivileged classes had been nothing but a brutish peasantry it might have continued indefinitely; but when there developed a class of professional men who were well-educated and highly intelligent, but saw themselves shut out from all advancement and influence, and when a class of small farmers arose who

were just prosperous enough to realise that their further development was hampered by obsolete and meaningless hindrances to their acquiring land and disposing of its produce—then these classes naturally began to get restive, and to inquire into the basis of a social system which said to them, Thus far and no farther.

§ 9. The Gospel according to Jean Jaques.—This question-<sup>1712-</sup>ing spirit was stimulated by a number of daring thinkers and <sup>1778</sup>brilliant writers during the eighteenth century, the most typical and influential of whom was Jean Jaques Rousseau. Like most of the teachers who have profoundly affected the minds of men, he was not so much an original thinker as one who caught up the spirit of the time and crystallised it into words, giving “a local habitation and a name” to what had before been mere ideas in the air. The exaggerated artificiality of the epoch was producing a reaction, and many people were beginning to feel a vague longing for a return to first principles in social life, in religion, and in politics. Of this “Back to Nature” gospel, Rousseau was the prophet. In his most famous book, *Du Contrat Social*,<sup>1762</sup> he asks himself what is the true basis of the State. “L’homme est né libre, et partout il est dans les fers. . . . Comment ce changement s’est-il fait? Je l’ignore. Qu’est-ce qui peut le rendre légitime? Je crois pouvoir résoudre cette question.” His main thesis is that peoples existed before kings, and therefore kings derive their powers from the consent of the people. “Trouver une forme d’association qui protège de toute la force commune la personne et les biens de chaque associé, et par laquelle chacun, s’unissant à tous, n’obéisse pourtant qu’à lui-même et reste aussi libre qu’auparavant—tel est le problème fondamental dont le Contrat Social donne la solution.” In short, his theories were a complete denial of the Divine Right of Kings and Nobles, and an affirmation of the Divine Right of Peoples.

These ideas “caught on” amongst the educated classes in France, and were eagerly discussed wherever two or three were gathered together. There was an enlightened minority even amongst the nobles who enthusiastically adopted them in theory, though they took no very definite steps towards carrying them out. They made an equally deep impression in the North American colonies, and their influence can be clearly traced in the statement of “The Rights of Man,” drawn up by Thomas Jeffer-<sup>1774</sup>



son, which precedes the Declaration of Independence. Moreover, it was here that they first bore fruit. Thousands of Frenchmen volunteered to fight for the young Republic, and they came home full of enthusiasm for the freedom and equality which they saw in America, and deeply impressed with the resultant prosperity which was in such marked contrast to the paralysis of the body politic at home in France.

1789 § 10. Hopes and Fears.—To dwell in detail upon the events which brought the old system in France to a violent end is no part of our present task ; but some of them had such far-reaching effects in History, and were so pregnant with lessons for the future guidance of mankind, that brief mention at least must be made of them.

What brought matters to a head was the threatened bankruptcy of the State. Wild extravagance on the part of Court and Courtiers for a century past, ruinously expensive and futile wars, the strangling of commerce and industry by the dead hand of feudal restrictions, the thrusting of the whole burden of taxation on to the backs least able to bear it, hopeless incompetence on the part of the officials whose duty it was to collect and spend the revenues : all these causes accumulated in their effect until some desperate remedy had to be found. As a last hope it was decided to summon the States General—a sort of atrophied Witenagemot, which had not met for 130 years, but which had in earlier times had the power to grant taxes to the king in return for his redressing the grievances of his subjects.

The Court party had sanctioned the summoning of this body with the idea that it should find some way of increasing the revenues and then go home. But most of the Commons, as well as not a few of the Nobles and Clergy, had come to Versailles with their heads full of theories about the “ Rights of Man,” and their hearts full of hope for the regeneration of mankind by means of “ Liberty ” and constitutional government. When the Court discovered the existence of this idea it got angry and frightened, and plotted to break up the Assembly by force ; whereupon the latter got angry and frightened too. Hence the hostility and suspicion between Court and People which led to the taking of the Bastille, and the removal of the Assembly to Paris.

1792–  
1794 § 11. Through Terror to Triumph.—The National Assembly, as it came to be called, was so busy concocting an ideal constitution that it had no time to find a remedy for the financial

difficulties, which became worse than ever. It therefore confiscated the lands both of the Nobles and of the Church, and millions of acres were sold to private citizens. This was the turning-point of the Revolution. Firstly, it alienated the Church from the cause of democracy: all through the nineteenth century the Church has been on the side of autocratic rule—except in Ireland, where circumstances have been peculiar. Secondly, it gave a vital and personal interest in the permanence of the Revolution to every peasant, who had thus had an opportunity to buy a piece of land free from hampering feudal dues and restrictions; for it was certain that the first effect of a restoration of the *ancien régime* would be to deprive him of his precious little farm, and to thrust him back into his old troubles. Thus he had a cause to work for and to fight for. 1791

The new Constitution, when at last it had been got going, may have been a logical interpretation of the Rights of Man, but it had one fatal defect—it would not work; and it was quickly subjected to a strain under which it broke down. The potentates of Europe, fearful of the spreading of these anti-divine-right theories to their own dominions, came with their armies to destroy the accursed thing and to restore their brother monarch to his former position. France was in an utterly disorganised state. The old institutions had been destroyed and no others established in their place; there was no money in the treasury and no officers in the army. Defeat and the destruction of the Revolution, with all that it meant to the unprivileged, seemed imminent. But a knot of determined men, in whom burning patriotism and faith in the power of the revolutionary doctrines for the redemption of mankind overrode all other considerations, seized the helm of State by main force. They had to find a way to put France in a state of defence with great invading armies from Austria and Prussia already within her borders; and they had at the same time to check the forces of reaction at home—both the force which wanted to restore the old regime of privilege, and the force of pure theoretical republicanism, which mightily resented this usurpation of authority by the dozen members of the Committee of Public Safety. The Jacobins achieved the astonishing feat of conquering all these enemies at once. They terrorised the malcontents into quiescence, they turned all France into an armed camp, and the peasant-in-arms did the rest, in defence of his precious bit of land. 1792-1794

1796-  
1814      § 12. The Birth of Nationalism.—By 1795 all fear of invasion was over, and the national spirit of France had been aroused to fever heat by the achievements of its armies—armies which were more truly *national* than any that had ever existed before. Not content with freeing the soil of France from the enemies of the Revolution, they now sought to spread the gospel into other lands by force of arms.

The Revolution had destroyed the old institutions of France, but it had done little to establish better, and the result was uncertainty, corruption, and chaos. To the French temperament, slack and incompetent government has always been peculiarly distasteful. When, therefore, the brilliant young general who had fed the national spirit with military glory in Italy and Egypt promised to give them the blessings of internal peace and order, they eagerly acquiesced in his seizure of autocratic power. Bonaparte always claimed that he had come not to destroy the Revolution, but to fulfil it. He preserved the forms of republican government, and his titles of “Consul” and “Emperor” had mainly military associations. The career was freely open to the talents under his rule, and, above all, he confirmed the peasant in the possession of his land. He re-organised the whole fabric of the administration, and his achievements in this field proved far more lasting than his conquests. The French felt that he represented the nation in a way that the old hereditary monarchs had never done.

1797-  
1806      The mercenaries of the old despotisms were no match for the newly aroused national spirit of France, now under the guidance of this masterful genius. Italy, the Netherlands, Germany, and Poland were successively overrun; and wherever the French armies went they spread the doctrines of the Revolution. The old feudal cobwebs were swept away; new thoughts, desires, and hopes were everywhere aroused. The invaders were welcomed as liberators by the populations of these countries, but if national sentiment was first aroused by this cordial understanding with those who were spreading the revolutionary gospel, it was afterwards enormously strengthened by the very contrary feeling which soon supervened.

Bonaparte found Great Britain in the way of the world-power at which he aimed, and to humble her became an obsession in his mind. Her insular position, coupled with her naval supremacy, drove him to attempt to achieve his end by stopping

1806-  
1814

her foreign trade, and thus crippling her resources. But this could only be done by crippling those of other countries too, and in order to compel them to submit to his "Continental System" he had to keep on foot an immense army and wage incessant wars. The old monarchies ignominiously failed to withstand his power; it was only when the nations bestirred themselves spontaneously to unite in determination to throw off the incubus that he was beaten. The Spaniards, the Russians, and the Germans successively dealt staggering blows at Bonaparte's monstrous perversion of the Revolutionary principles, and the great battle which was really the decisive point in his downfall was well called "The 1813 Battle of the Nations."

§ 13. The Reaction.—At the Peace Conference which followed, 1815 the rulers of Europe tried to restore the *status quo ante bellum*. National sentiment had been exploited to bring about the defeat of Bonaparte, but now that this object had been safely attained it was repudiated. The democratic doctrines which the Revolution had expressed and which the French armies had carried into every country of Europe, were to be forgotten; the old regime of sovereigns ruling by the "right divine to govern wrong," and with a special place in the sun for gentlemen, was to be revived. For a time the forces of reaction seemed to be triumphant. A settlement of Europe was made at the Congress of Vienna which contemptuously disregarded the aspirations of peoples towards national unity; and soon afterwards the Czar succeeded in founding a Holy Alliance, the object of which was to repress any demand for constitutional government or the limiting of monarchies. Hence the laws were not reformed in accordance with the new conditions described in the last chapter, until two generations had passed and discontent had swollen almost to bursting point; for the ruling class were anxious to seek out and nip in the bud any tendency to democratic reform, lest an outbreak of "Jacobinism" should sweep away their privileged position.

But though the seeds which had been sown between 1789 and 1815 were trampled underfoot, they could not be destroyed: their vitality was too strong, and the soil on which they had fallen was too fertile and well-prepared. The development of the race had reached a stage when the old restrictive system no longer sufficed it. Much of the history of the nineteenth century is taken up with the story of how the mighty passions and beliefs

inspired by the Revolution ultimately burst forth in spite of every obstacle which the outworn despotisms placed in their way ; and how, in conjunction with the new industrial system, they made the civilisation in which we live to-day.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How far was the Revolution the outcome of the Renaissance ?
2. Why did the Revolution come to a head first in France ?
3. What was the effect of the Revolution on England ?
4. Show the effect of the Revolution in arousing the spirit of Nationalism in Europe.

## CHAPTER III

### The Oligarchy

"He, through whose hands passed a quarter of the patronage of a county; who dammed or turned the stream of promotion; whose mere hint could consign the troublesome to the press-gang; who belonged almost as definitely to a caste as do white men in the India of to-day; who seldom showed himself to the vulgar save in his coach and four, or riding with belted grooms behind him—about such an one there was, if no divinity, at least the ægis of real power, that habit which unquestioned authority alone confers, that port of Jove to which men bow."—WEYMAN, *Chippinge*.

IN the "good old days" before the dual revolution, the government of England appeared, both in the eyes of our own statesmen and in those of foreign contemporaries, to be a model democracy. We had an elected Parliament; and the King's ministers were dependent on that Parliament for the supplies of money without which they could not rule the country. Appearances were deceptive, however, for it was really the land-owning aristocrats who held the supreme power in the State, and eighteenth-century Britain was an Oligarchy. By the end of the Napoleonic War the system had been undermined by the new spirit of Democracy and by the new economic organisation of society, but its vitality was still so strong that it continued to exist with almost unimpaired authority until the Great Reform Bill of 1832.

We must now investigate the historical causes of this ascendancy of the Upper Classes and the manner in which it operated.

§ 14. "The Gentlemen of England."—We have seen that in France the outcome of the long struggle between the Mediæval monarchy and the greater feudal nobles was a complete victory for the Sovereign. In England, on the other hand, the corresponding struggle, after continuing in one form or another right down to the close of the seventeenth century, resulted in a triumph of the Aristocracy. For this is the real meaning of the Revolution of 1688. In future the Sovereign was to have a parliamentary title to the throne; the power which gave the title could also

take it away, and the dependence of the King on Parliament was a part of a contract. But "Parliament" really meant the land-owning classes, since it was their influence which dominated that assembly. The House of Lords—a much more important institution then than now—consisted almost exclusively of men of this class; and the House of Commons was equally under their control, since in nearly all the constituencies they exercised the tremendous power of the landlord.

There has hardly ever been in any country a class of men with a position at once so dignified and so powerful as that of the English aristocrats of the eighteenth century. Unlike their contemporaries in France, they were not mere idle voluptuaries. Certainly, a large part of their lives was spent in the pursuit of pleasure. They hunted, and coursed, and shot, and raced, and gambled, and drank their two or three bottles of port of an evening; while their patronage of the arts was reflected in the libraries and picture galleries which adorned their country houses. But they also found time to rule England.

Not only did they control Parliament; their power came home to the humbler classes more immediately though their control over local affairs. For these were in the hands of the magistrates, who were all members of this class, and who were practically free from outside interference owing to the lack of communications. Often a gentleman would try cases in his own dining-room with his own servants as court officials. If a fellow was troublesome or failed in respect to his superiors—such as by not voting as he was told, for instance—there were a hundred ways of making his life intolerable. He could be turned out of his cottage, he could be refused all relief from the poor rate, he could be imprisoned for a month or two on some trifling charge (such as poaching, against which the laws were ferociously severe). He might even be committed as an incorrigible rogue to the Quarter Sessions, when a hint could be given to the judge that the fellow would be better out of the way.

Another feature of English social life which tended to depress the lower classes was the position of the clergy. Whereas the Catholic priest and the Nonconformist minister were—and indeed are, for the most part, to this day—men of the people, sprung from their ranks and understanding their needs, the Church of England parson was a member of the ruling caste. He was often a magistrate, it was to the aristocracy that he mostly looked for

preferment, and he usually hunted and drank and shared the outlook and prejudices of the rest of the gentry.

The "Justice of the Peace" was an institution peculiar to England. Under the Tudors it had developed as a cheap way of administering the laws throughout the country; under the Stuarts it had prevented any such centralisation of power as took place in France; under the first two Georges it reached its maximum of influence, for upon its prestige depended the good order of the country, since the Government had at its disposal no police force and practically no standing army. One of its most important effects was that it developed a "governing class" such as no other nation possessed—a class accustomed to the exercise of authority, prepared to take the initiative in all matters of public interest, and experienced in the business of administration.

§ 15. Whigs and Tories.—The aristocratic families which 1689 had played a leading part in substituting William of Orange for James II were known as "Whigs," and when they succeeded in establishing another imported nominee on the throne in the person of George I, they laid the foundation of an ascendancy in 1714 politics which lasted for fifty years. Their opponents, nicknamed "Tories," were for a long time hopelessly discredited by the fact that their political creed was associated with the Divine Right theories of the Stuarts, together with a tendency to Catholicism and a foreign policy of subservience to France.

Thus, until the death of George II the political supremacy of 1760 the Whigs was unchallenged. The king depended on them to keep him on his throne, and gave them a cordial support in return. This support chiefly took the form of allowing them to fill with their own dependants and friends the innumerable posts of honour and profit in the Court, the Services, the Law, and the Church. They were thus enabled to keep their party together in Parliament by a sort of corrupt bargain.

When George III came to the throne, however, he determined 1760 that he would not be the puppet of this clique. He had been brought up in the principles of a new Toryism expounded in Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*. The power of the Sovereign was to be paramount in the State. It was his duty to consult the wishes and the welfare of his people, but these could not be ascertained through the medium of such a tainted and self-seeking body as the peer-controlled Parliament. Government by a



political party was to cease, and Parliament was to be little more than an advisory council. George soon found that the political development of this country was too advanced for it to be ruled by a "benevolent despot" as Russia, Prussia, and Austria were at this time. Since he could not abolish the power of Parliament he sought to get control of it. This he soon found himself able to do by the simple process of keeping the "patronage" in his own hands, and using it to form and keep together a new party, the "King's Friends." By this method he broke the power of the Whigs and made himself master of Parliament for twelve years.

1775-1783 Had he been successful in the War of Independence this system of government might have been prolonged indefinitely, and the whole course of our subsequent history would have been different. But he failed, and the discredit of the failure was so great that even the members of his own party in the House, with their pockets filled with Royal bounties and commissions and pensions, could not support him any longer. The result of the 1782 surrender of Yorktown was to put the Whigs once more in office.

§ 16. The Development of Parties under Pitt. — The 1782-1806 twelve years they had spent "in the wilderness" had done much to purify the political character of the Whigs. The machinery for controlling Parliament which they had invented to keep themselves in power took on a new aspect now that it had been used by the King to keep them out of it. They determined to prevent such a thing happening again. If a larger proportion of the people had votes, and if the seats were more fairly distributed over the country, it would be impossible for the King to influence the House in this way. So they now began to advocate Parliamentary Reform; and the first use they made of their regained 1782 power was to abolish a number of sinecures.

They had a very short innings, however. George was by this time a very experienced and wily political tactician, and he soon found a way to recover a part at least of his lost power. The Whigs were no longer a compact homogeneous body. One section still sought to maintain the patrician predominance in the State, while the other aimed rather at a government controlled by ministers who had the support of the nation. The real founder of this advanced school was the great Lord Chatham, and it was 1783 his son whom the King now made Prime Minister at the age of twenty-four. The position was thus a sort of compromise: the

King had to support Pitt in order to keep out the Old Whigs whom he detested, while Pitt was dependent on the King's Friends to maintain his majority in the House of Commons.

For some years Pitt remained a New Whig in principle, and one of his first actions was to bring in a measure of parliamentary reform. Had he succeeded in getting it passed the process of adjustment necessitated by the great revolutions might have § 6 been easier, for a reformed Parliament would have represented the ideas and needs of a larger proportion of the nation, and the country would have been spared much of the distress, discontent, and class-bitterness which followed. But the King and his friends feared to see a popularly elected and independent Parliament, while the Old Whigs were jealous of Pitt's swift advancement, and were not very cordial supporters of a measure which would diminish their position as landlords. The opportunity was lost, and it did not recur until more than a generation had passed away and almost irretrievable damage had been done to the national unity.

Within a few years the Revolutionary Wars broke out, and 1793 these put all legislative reforms out of the question, especially after the "Reign of Terror" made the ruling classes associate democratic theories with violence and bloodshed. For the next forty years this dread of "Jacobinism" was a perpetual nightmare to those in authority. Any suggested redress of political or social grievances they looked on as the thin end of the wedge of revolution. Because in France there was too violent a change in the constitution, in England there was to be none at all. Pitt, absorbed in winning the war and in suppressing disaffection at home, lost all his democratic leanings. Fox, the leader of the Whigs, remained true to his ideal of "liberty," and declared that the French Revolution was the most glorious event in history, but most of the party joined Burke in denouncing it; and as soon as the war broke out they began to support the Tory Government of Pitt in order that the nation might present a united front to the enemy. Thus the Whig Opposition degenerated into the position of a discredited minority, paralysed by their unpopular position as an unpatriotic faction seeking to hamper the Government of the country in the prosecution of the war.

§ 17. **The Growth of the Cabinet System.**—The two most striking features in the development of the constitution during the eighteenth century were the increasing importance of the

chief minister compared with his colleagues, and the growth of the idea of cabinet unity.

- 1689 Down to the time of William III the King had chosen his ministers separately, each for his own office. If he wished to consult several of them jointly, he presided over their meeting in person. Mutual jealousies mostly prevented their combining to urge any particular line of policy, nor did the King desire to see what he would regard as "collusion" amongst them. But when
- 1714 George of Hanover became King, his ignorance of the English language made it impossible for him to preside over council meetings, and the minister who took his place and acted as the connecting link between the Sovereign and the Executive began to have a preponderating importance amongst his colleagues. Walpole, in whom greed of power was a vice, was just the man to take the fullest advantage of the situation; but even towards the end of his long career so little was the system accepted as a permanent feature of the Constitution that the epithet "Prime Minister" was applied to him by his opponents as an expression of abuse and hatred, and he himself always emphatically disclaimed the position.
- 1740

- George III, in his desire to undo the constitutional developments which had grown up under his immediate predecessors, tried to revert to the old method of having independent ministers with the sovereign as sole bond of union amongst them. This reaction soon proved to be impossible, and he had to be content with having a Prime Minister who was his own personal supporter, and who would act as general manager of the Cabinet and of "The King's Party" in Parliament on his behalf. This was the position of Lord North.
- 1770

By the time Pitt became Premier in 1784, the new system had crystallised into something like its present-day form. The sovereign summons the leader of one of the political parties and desires him to form a Ministry. His choice is limited by the fact that it is impossible for any ministers to carry on the government without the support of a majority of the members of Parliament. The political leader who has received this commission then selects the other ministers, and presents his list to the King for approval. Thereafter he presides over the meetings of the Cabinet, and reports upon its proceedings to the King. Its members must be of one mind on all the important questions of the day, and they must support its legislative and administrative acts both inside

Parliament and outside it. If any member of the Cabinet finds that he cannot agree with this joint policy he must resign his office; it is unconstitutional for him to express any disapproval of it in public.

§ 18. **The Ideas of the Ruling Class.**—Under Pitt the exclusiveness of the ruling class began to break down. He swamped the old Whig families in the House of Lords by lavish new creations of Peers, mostly drawn from men enriched by the new industries and from the professional classes; and the party began to attract into politics young men of character and ability born outside the purple of the old aristocracy. But the new men quickly absorbed the ideas and prejudices of the country gentlemen who formed the backbone of the party. All alike looked upon the constitution which gave them power and privilege as the most perfect contrivance of the human intellect for the ruling of a country. They took a great pride in the fact that it had not been deliberately manufactured like the French and American Constitutions, but was a thing of organic growth, like a man or a tree. What they failed to grasp was that this process of development was not ended. They conceived the political and social life of Britain not as a mere phase in the course of evolution, but as a static, permanent condition of things. Civilisation had arrived. Their world was the appointed end which the Creator had designed from the beginning. We in our day are accustomed to rapid and unexpected developments both in politics and in science; we may approve or disapprove of them, but they do not shock us. In those days the idea of any sudden vital change in the accepted order of things did not merely arouse men's opposition: it made them sick and giddy, as if they had looked over the edge of a precipice.

The twin revolutions had already begun to cut away the ground from under the feet of this ruling class, but the effect of this was for many years hidden from view. The rulers themselves took good care that this should be so. The new industrial system had caused the growth of a wage-paid proletariat, and the French Revolution had put new ideas into men's heads as to the relationship of the individual to the State; but the dangers arising from this combination could be met by one broad policy. By suppressing all symptoms of discontent and all aspirations for a higher standard of living on the part of the working-class they would be killing two birds with one stone: the spread of the pernicious doctrines

- would be checked at home, and the "sinews of war" would be provided to combat them abroad. In all the questions which arose as to wages and conditions of labour the masters must be supported against the men: only thus could factories and farms be made to pay and the wherewithal to beat Bonaparte be provided. When workmen sought to improve their position by united action, a Combination Act was passed to prohibit such "conspiracies." When revelations were made as to the forced labour of children in factories for fourteen or sixteen hours a day, a member of the House of Commons pointed out that it was "training them in habits of industry." When it was proposed that an Act should be passed to compel farmers to pay a minimum wage to enable their labourers to be independent of relief from the poor rate, Pitt ridiculed the idea that wages or prices could be regulated—they were the result of unalterable laws of supply and demand. When starving workers appealed to the magistrates to enforce the Elizabethan Statute of Apprentices and prevent employers from underselling them by "sweated labour," fresh legislation was rushed through to modify the Statute. Of course, this attitude towards the new conditions could not be maintained for ever; and we shall see in the course of the next half-dozen chapters how it came to be modified in time to prevent the revolutionary explosion which sometimes seemed to be inevitable.

It is not difficult for us to-day to realise the unwisdom and short-sightedness of this point of view, but we must not overlook the fact that the men who maintained it had many excellent qualities, and that we owe them much. They were not idle voluptuaries, like the upper classes of most countries. They were full of public spirit, very ready to sacrifice their time and their ease to the service of the commonwealth. It was their proud belief in their race and their country, and their steadfast determination in the face of disaster and discouragement, that ensured England's ultimate success in the long struggle with France.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the positions of the English and the French nobility in the eighteenth century.
2. What traces do you see to-day of the old "ruling classes"? (*I.e.* J.P.s., power of landlords, parliamentary influence, etc.).
3. Write an entry in the diary of a country gentleman of the eighteenth century, giving an account of how he spent his day.
4. Sketch the history of the Whig Party from 1714 to 1815.

## CHAPTER IV

### Peace without Plenty

"When war breaks out the wages of labour have a tendency to rise. When it ends, on the contrary, a great mass of persons are dismissed from public employment, and, flooding the labour market, reduce the rate of wages. . . . There is pomp and circumstance, there is glory and excitement about war which, notwithstanding the miseries it entails, invest it with charms in the eyes of the community, and tend to blind men to those evils to a fearful and dangerous degree."—W. E. GLADSTONE: Budget Speech of 1854.

IN 1815 we brought to an end a war which had lasted, with two short intermissions, since 1793. "The Corsican Ogre" was now an exile in St. Helena, and the nations and rulers of Europe felt that they could breathe freely once more. In our own country, particularly, the close of the war had been looked forward to as the beginning of a new era of prosperity and happiness, for people did not then realise as well as we do to-day (taught by the bitter lessons of recent experience) that the evils that wars do live after them.

In many respects the position at this juncture resembled that which arose at the end of the Great War of 1914-18, and we shall find the parallel both interesting and instructive. One of the chief benefits of historical study is that we can learn from it not to make the same mistakes twice. In the later crisis we certainly grasped the realities of the situation better than our ancestors after Waterloo, but if the nation had had a wider and deeper knowledge of history in the years 1918-20 it would have been spared much confusion, disappointment, and waste of effort.

Let us now examine the circumstances which prevailed in 1815, and see how the rulers of that day dealt with them.

§ 19. "Putting the Clock Back."—The Tory party, having 1815 entrenched itself in power with the support of the King, had

ruled Britain throughout the twenty years of the war. It was only a small section even of the Whig minority that made any show of opposition in Parliament; and although George III was shut up at Windsor, permanently insane, the Prince Regent had been cured of his early tendencies to Whiggery by his accession to power, and was now as strong a supporter of the Tories as his father had been. The Ministers enjoyed great prestige as the men who had "won the war." Lord Liverpool had been Prime Minister since the assassination of Perceval in 1812, and the chief members of his Cabinet were Lord Eldon (the Lord Chancellor), Lord Sidmouth (formerly Mr. Addington, the Home Secretary), and Lord Castlereagh (the Foreign Secretary).

The great object of the potentates of Europe after Waterloo was "Restoration and Reaction." The stupendous moral forces and aspirations which had been released by the French Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel were to be ignored; and an agreement was made that any future manifestation of the revolutionary spirit should be crushed by the joint action of the Powers. The old dynasties were restored to their thrones. All the developments of the past quarter of a century were to be cancelled and obliterated, and the social and political systems that had been in force before 1789 were to be re-established.

Our own Government, which was represented at the Conference of Vienna by Lord Castlereagh, was in general sympathy with these plans, but they would not enter into any close alliance with foreign Powers for the suppression of "Jacobinism." Although they did not recognise the significance of the upheaval which mankind had just experienced, or realise how completely and permanently the Industrial Revolution had altered all the conditions of life, or appreciate how irresistible was the force of the ideas engendered by its political counterpart, they could not disguise from themselves that they were likely to have their hands pretty full of domestic difficulties before long. And so it proved.

§ 20. The Fictitious Prosperity of War-time.—War produces an appearance of prosperity which disguises for the time what is really happening to the nation's wealth. The Government requires great quantities of foodstuffs, of clothing, of arms and ammunition. Subsidies, too, are wanted for allies, and these subsidies do not take the form of coin or bank-notes, but are sent in the guise of commodities for the prosecution of the

war. Thus, for all such commodities there is an abnormal demand, this demand raises prices, and industries are stimulated into exceptional activity.

Moreover, all through the Napoleonic War, Britain's naval supremacy had shut her enemies out of all seaborne traffic, while the fact that the territories of her allies were disturbed by almost incessant warfare had prevented even them from entering into industrial competition with her. Thus she was left with a monopoly of the world's markets, and it was largely this fact which gave her the wealth to carry on the war. It has been said that the hideous factory towns which at this time were springing up in the Northern and Midland parts of England were the "hidden reef" on which the Napoleonic Empire foundered, and it would be almost equally true to say that German Junkerdom struck the same reef a century later.

The agricultural interests had also made great profits out of the French wars. The ever-increasing numbers of the non-food-producing population in the towns, and the impossibility of importing food from abroad, raised the price of corn to a height hitherto undreamt of. Hence farmers were encouraged to borrow more capital to sink in turning pasture land into wheat-fields; and getting crops off poor lands in this way can only be done profitably when prices are high. Here, again, we can see a parallel in the effects of the war of 1914-18: never was there such a "boom" in farming, never had the soil of Britain been forced to bear such crops.

§ 21. **The Slump of Peace.**—It is only after the war is over that the hollowness of this prosperity becomes apparent. As soon as peace is declared after every war (but particularly after these two great wars which involved such a complete dislocation in the ordinary life of the country) the Government forthwith cuts down its purchases by something like 90 per cent. The trade routes are once more thrown open to all the world. In 1815 as in 1918 it was confidently hoped and expected that with the return of peace the other nations would once more become purchasers of our goods, but on each occasion this hope proved illusory: these nations, ruined by the long war, were too poor to buy, and tried to foster their own industries by restricting the importation of foreign-made goods. After both wars there were heavy stocks left on the hands of manufacturers which had to be sold at a loss; mills and foundries were closed



down, and thousands of men were thrown out of work. Then, at this critical juncture, great numbers of discharged soldiers and sailors were thrown upon the labour market just when there was no possibility of its absorbing them.

The fact is that war involves an appalling waste of wealth, using that word in its economic sense of *commodities*. If £1,000 is spent on making a stocking-machine, by the time it is worn out it has paid for itself over and over again by having added to the world's wealth the thousands of pairs of stockings it has knitted; but if the same sum is spent on a torpedo, its use, so far from adding to the world's wealth, has diminished it, particularly when it wipes out the lives of those who might otherwise have engaged in productive labour. All this waste of material has to be made up sooner or later. So long as a Government can get money lent to it (either by its own people or from foreign loans) so long it can carry on a war; and the spending of this borrowed wealth gives a temporary appearance of prosperity. But after the war is over all these debts remain to be liquidated; when men engage in destroying wealth instead of producing it they are mortgaging their *future* produce, and they will have to work all the harder later on to make up for it. This is the real reason for the era of high prices which always follows a great war. Moreover, since the Government has debts to pay, taxation has to be kept high; and this not only diminishes the spending power of the working classes but leaves the capitalists less surplus money to use in extending their businesses. Manufacturing plant and farm land which could be profitably employed when there was a big demand are now thrown out of use. There follows widespread unemployment, which still further diminishes spending power, and a general stagnation of trade is the result.

#### § 22. The Industrial Revolution and "The Class War."—

The crisis at the end of the Napoleonic War was further complicated by the fact that it was between the years 1790 and 1815 that the Industrial Revolution was making the most rapid strides; in fact the war itself had accelerated the change by creating abnormal demand for produce. The wealth of the community as a whole had immensely increased, but it was becoming more and more concentrated in the hands of employers and landlords, whose position gave them a great advantage over the workers in its distribution. Mass production economised labour, women and children could perform many of the operations

required, and the increase of competition for employment enabled the employer to cut down wages and add to the hours of labour.

The humbler classes could no longer look to their social superiors for help and protection, for the old spirit of personal knowledge and interest was fast dying out; while the workers themselves, thus left face to face with the ruthless force of competition, could do nothing to improve their lot—they had no votes, and Parliament was under the control of the aristocrat-landlord class, who supported the capitalist-employer class for a very cogent reason. Since the new system of production was § 18 increasing the taxable wealth of the country, and so enabling it to bear the expense of the war, it was felt that this increase must be maintained at all costs. The landlords and employers of labour must therefore be supported in any struggle with their workpeople that threatened to diminish their profits. Moreover, the current doctrines of political economy seemed to confirm the wisdom of this policy. Adam Smith, in his *Wealth 1776 of Nations*, had pointed out that wages and profits could not be regulated by governments. They were the result of all-powerful economic laws. And now the Rev. Thomas Malthus had proved 1798 in his *Essay on Population*, that the lower orders were condemned, not by the tyranny of man, but by hard facts as immutable as the multiplication table, to live on the verge of starvation. The gist of his argument was that the population always increases up to the limit of subsistence. A period of prosperity will enable more people to marry and have children until there is not enough food to go round, when famine will reduce the numbers. Any attempt on the part of the poor to secure for themselves a more generous share in the new wealth was futile. Moreover, it was dangerous. Movements of the popular will were likely to lead to the horrors of “Jacobinism.” Clearly, then, it was the duty of enlightened rulers to be on the watch to frustrate such pernicious designs before they had time to develop.

One simple fact throws floods of light on the relationship between governors and governed at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Having found that the billeting of troops 1795- about the country led to “fraternisation” between the soldiers 1798 and working men, Pitt had barracks built so that the troops might be more reliable in maintaining law and order. What

was this but a tacit recognition that a "class war" had broken out?

The gradual development of this position had been disguised so long as the war was on. For one thing, the imperative need for the concentration of all our civil and military resources on repelling the Bonaparte menace took men's minds away from all domestic concerns. For another, the war had caused a temporary wave of prosperity. Lastly, the high prices and severe taxation were expected to cease as soon as the war was over. But when peace came and the hopes of immediate improvement died away, it became apparent that the dislocation inevitable at such times was aggravated by the new economic conditions which had grown up almost unnoticed during the previous quarter of a century.

1816

§ 23. Parliament makes Bad worse : (a) By Removing the Income Tax.—Unfortunately the situation in 1815 was aggravated by the short-sighted and selfish legislation of Parliament. Hardly had the Treaty of Peace been signed when a demand was raised in the House of Commons for the withdrawal of the income tax. The main argument in favour of this course was that when the tax had been first imposed Pitt had expressly promised that it should be regarded purely as an emergency measure, "for the duration of the war." Of course it was only reasonable to expect the Government to reduce taxation now that the war was over, but the sudden and complete removal of the income tax was more than the revenue could stand—it was bound to result in a heavy deficit which would have to be made up from other resources. There was a particular reason why it was to the personal interest of members of Parliament that the lifting of the burden should take this form. Direct taxes, like the income tax, which come straight out of the pockets of the taxpayer into the Government coffers, fall most heavily on the rich; whereas indirect taxes, like import duties, which are paid on bringing goods into the country by merchants who recoup themselves by raising the price to the consumers, fall most heavily on the poor. The reason for this is that it is far more difficult to assess and collect direct taxes from the weekly wages of labouring men than it is to do so from the salaries of professional men or the profits of capitalists or the rent-rolls of landlords; and, on the other hand, the poor man and his family consume almost as much bread or sugar as the rich man,

and therefore pay an amount in taxation on it altogether out of proportion to their income. It was perhaps natural that the upper classes, who alone were represented in Parliament, should demand the immediate redemption of Pitt's pledge. In vain did Lord Liverpool's Ministry point out that the expenses of war do not cease abruptly at the signing of peace, and plead that the immediate withdrawal of such a substantial source of revenue would leave them in sore financial straits. Their back-bench supporters demanded that the tax should be abolished, and abolished it had to be, especially as those back-benchers had the support of many of the opposition Whigs.

But the national accounts had to be balanced somehow, and the immediate and inevitable result of the withdrawal of the income tax was a great increase in indirect taxation. Further duties were levied on all sorts of raw materials and manufactured articles, until the cost of living was raised so much that quite half the labourer's earnings went in paying taxes: "Taxes upon every article which enters the mouth or covers the back, or is placed under the foot—taxes upon everything which it is pleasant to smell, taste or feel—taxes on everything on earth or in the waters under the earth—upon warmth, light, and locomotion—taxes on the raw material, and on every value which is added to it by the industry of man—on the ermine which decorates the judge and on the rope which hangs the criminal—on the brass nails in the coffin and on the ribands of the bride—on the poor man's salt and the rich man's spice—at bed or board—couchant or levant, we must pay."<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, this taxation increased the working man's already cruel difficulty in finding employment, for it was ruinous to the country's trade. The duties naturally restricted imports, and restricted imports involve restricted exports, since, as we have already seen, all foreign trade is really not a cash transaction but an exchange of goods. Here, therefore, was another potent cause of trade depression and discontent.

§ 24. Parliament makes Bad worse: (b) It passes the 1810 Corn Laws.—Nor was the substitution of indirect for direct taxes the worst action of Parliament at this lamentable crisis. The farmers who had recklessly sunk capital—often borrowed at high rates of interest—in bringing land of poor quality under the plough, saw the advent of peace with consternation. Hence—

<sup>1</sup> Sydney Smith.

forward they would have to enter into competition with foreign-grown corn, and this would bring down the price with a run. If it fell to anything like the pre-war level, all the money they had sunk would be lost, for the inferior land could not be profitably cultivated unless the price was extravagantly high. The calamity of cheap food must be prevented at all costs. The wealth of the landlords who dominated Parliament was mostly derived from the rents paid by those farmers—rents which could only be maintained at a satisfactorily high level if the farmers' profits were, too. Crushing duties were therefore put on the importation of corn; indeed, it could not be imported at all until the price had risen to 80s. a quarter, which made the cost of bread about 1s. the 2-lb. loaf—and this at a time when the usual wages for a full-grown man were about 7s. a week.

Thus all the rest of the community was taxed to pay a sort of subsidy to the farmers and their landlords, who obtained this concession by means of their monopoly of parliamentary power. Of course, they had no suspicion that they were acting in a greedy and tyrannical way; they could find plenty of high-sounding arguments for all that they did. They pointed out that agriculture was the backbone of the country, that unless it prospered the people would starve in war-time, and so on. As a matter of fact these "Corn Laws," as they came to be called, did little real good to those who passed them; for they kept the price of bread so high that the poor were often unable to make it a part of their daily food at all—it became a luxury. For the next twenty years and more the "staff of life" to the working classes was not bread, but turnips and potatoes. Thus the demand for corn fell off; and, owing to the limited source of supply, the price fluctuated in the most bewildering way from year to year, according to the harvest, so that the farmer was in constant doubt and difficulty. But the most disastrous result of all was that the working classes, both in town and country, grew up a stunted, ill-nourished, discontented race.

There were many who foresaw these calamities; meetings were held to protest against the passing of the laws, and every effort was made to impress the minds of members of Parliament with the disastrous effects they would have upon the country. But all was in vain; short-sighted self-interest prevailed, and the duties were put on in spite of all the opposition which the middle and lower classes could bring to bear, for these had no

votes and little influence even of an indirect sort on the government of their country.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How far would you say that history repeated itself in the social and economic results of the Great War of 1914-18?
2. Did Parliament show the same spirit towards post-war problems in 1918 that it had shown in 1815? How had its character changed?
3. What are the chief direct and indirect taxes at the present day?
4. Are you in favour of the agricultural interest being subsidised at the expense of the rest of the community to-day? What is there to be said in favour of such a course?
5. What is it that stabilises the price of corn to-day?

## CHAPTER V

### Radicals, Riots, and Repression

"This was what these poor operatives, with all the darkness that was in them and about them, did manage to perform. They put their huge inarticulate question, What are you going to do with us? in a manner audible to every reflective soul in this kingdom; exciting deep pity in all good men, deep anxiety in all men whatever. . . . All England heard the question: it is the first practical form of our sphinx-riddle. England will answer it or England will perish; one does not yet expect the latter result."  
—THOMAS CARLYLE, *Past and Present*.

THE next seven years after the battle of Waterloo were among the blackest in our history. Bad trade led to unemployment, unemployment led to famine, famine led to disturbances of the peace, and these disturbances to a severe policy of repression on the part of the Government. We have already examined the threefold cause of this deplorable state of things: the economic result of war-waste, the rapid development of large-scale production, and the unwise legislation of Parliament in 1815-16. In this Chapter we shall discuss the forms that the social unrest of the period took, and the method by which the Government attempted to deal with it.

§ 25. The Radicals.—In those days about 1 per cent. of the people had votes: "All that the people had to do with the laws was to obey them," as a dignitary of the Church had said some time before. Parliament could pass laws which involved masses of men in want and misery without those masses being able to do anything to help themselves. It seemed to be more and more evident that little could or would be done to improve their lot until Parliament itself was reformed. So long as it did not really represent the whole nation, but only a privileged section of it, so long would the welfare of the whole be subordinated to that of the part. That the government of the country ought to be carried on *for* the people—that is to say, with their interests in view—was

a maxim to which everybody would have agreed, at least in theory, however much they might disregard it in practice. But that it should be carried on by the people was a new idea, generally associated with the French Revolution, and the more dreaded by the ruling class for that very reason.

Those who advocated this democratic form of government were called Radicals, and their political doctrines first became prominent in these years after Waterloo. They carried on their propaganda by various methods, they favoured various plans for bringing the desired changes about, but their common object was a radical alteration in the distribution of political power—hence the name by which they were known. In Parliament they were represented only by Sir Francis Burdett and Joseph Hume—mere voices crying in the wilderness. But outside it there were Major Cartwright, who founded “Hampden Clubs” in which wildly democratic schemes were propounded and discussed; and “Orator” Hunt, a demagogue who went about the country stirring the hearts of men to anger and enthusiasm at his great mass-meetings; and Jeremy Bentham, the prophet of a little band of political philosophers, who was thinking out in the seclusion of his house at Westminster an elaborate scheme of remedial laws which it would be impossible to bring into force so long as the existing oligarchy controlled the constitution. Above all, there was William Cobbett, the first and ablest and most influential of Radical journalists.

§ 26. Cobbett and his “Political Register.”—Cobbett 1762-1835 belonged to the yeoman-farmer class, and had served in the army. He founded a weekly journal called the *Political Register*, devoted to scathing attacks on what he called “The Thing”—the malign combination of borough-owners, place-mongers, and parsons, who were in a conspiracy to keep the plain Englishman out of his political and social rights. “A very large proportion of the agricultural labourers of England,” he wrote, “a very large proportion of those who raise all the food, who make all the buildings, who prepare all the fuel, who, in short, by their labour sustain the community; a very large part of these exist in a state of almost incessant hunger.” This deplorable state of things was the result of the transformation which had come over the country during the last thirty years. Cobbett would never admit that the capitalistic system was a necessary stage in social evolution. He longed for a return to the “good old days”



before the Industrial Revolution, and to a purging of government from corruption, bigotry, and class interests, as a remedy for all the evils from which Britain was suffering.

In many ways he was a typical "John Bull." He loved the countryside and its pursuits, he hated the new town life (he called London "The Wen"), and he wanted beef and beer for all. He had a command of terse, racy, vigorous English, and a gift for biting sarcasm which often stung the victims of his scornful attacks into desperate efforts to get rid of him. Once they did succeed in driving him into exile in America ("to see a free country for once, and to see every labourer with plenty to eat and drink! think of *that*! No long-sworded and whiskered captains; no judges escorted from town to town and sitting under the guard of dragoons. No Cannings, Liverpools, Castlereaghs, Eldons or Sidmouths! No Wilberforces! Think of *that*! No Wilberforces!"), but after a couple of years he came back to carry on his agitation more vigorously than ever. The *Political Register* had an immense circulation, and when the Government sought to check it by imposing a stamp duty which raised the price to 6d., little reading-circles were formed by men who clubbed together to buy it and have it read to them—for very few of the working men of Britain could read it for themselves in those times.

Cobbett was always opposed to violence and rioting and machine-breaking; he deprecated even strikes. The privations of the poor were not the fault of individual employers: they were all caused by the accursed "System," the thrice-accursed "Thing." His was a constitutional agitation for constitutional objects. He saw too clearly the futility of spasmodic rebellion.

1816-1819 § 27. The Riots.—Nevertheless, there was a good deal of disturbance and "sabotage" during those gloomy years. Even those who could get work found that the combination of low wages and high prices kept them on the verge of starvation. They were powerless politically, and they felt that the Government neither knew nor cared about their troubles. They sought to attract the attention of the ruling class by various expedients, a common one being "marches of the unemployed" as in more recent times. The Staffordshire miners dragged wagon-loads of coal up to London as a present to the Prince Regent, in the hope that he would thus be induced to do something for them. The famous 1817 "Blanketeers" started out from Manchester in a similar way, but their numbers dwindled rapidly, and it was a mere handful

that were dispersed with bloodshed by the soldiers at Derby. Great meetings were held in the industrial districts, at which the language used by the speakers was often violent and sometimes revolutionary. In a few cases there was something like a serious riot, as in the Spa Fields affair, when the mob raided a gunsmith's shop. Here and there throughout the country there were local disturbances; the ricks of unfriendly farmers, and the mechanical looms which seemed to have thrown so many men out of employment, were destroyed. Such acts as these could do nobody any good; they were symptoms of blind and impotent rage against a cruel fate. They were often spoken of as "Luddite Riots," because a Captain Ludd was supposed to be organising them, but there is now no doubt that he was a mythical personage—a sort of "bogey-man" with which the rioters hoped to frighten the capitalists. 1816

The Government, faced with these manifestations of discontent, made no serious attempt to remove the cause of the feeling; nor did they try to apply remedial measures, such as starting relief works or re-adjusting the burden of taxation so as to cheapen the necessaries of life. They looked upon the disturbances as signs of a great secret conspiracy on the part of Jacobinical miscreants to overturn the divinely ordered social and political system of the country. The methods they adopted for ferreting out this supposed conspiracy, and for getting convictions of persons accused of being connected with it, were shameful and degrading. Secret commissions were appointed to inquire into the disturbances, and spies in the pay of the Home Office were sent about the disaffected districts to collect evidence—unguarded conversations in public houses, for instance. Of course it was to the interest of these people to present such "Confidential Reports," as would keep their employers convinced that their services could not safely be dispensed with. Several little riots in Yorkshire and Derbyshire were actually stimulated by these *agents provocateurs*—it is significant that we have no expression in our own language for this sort of thing.

§ 28. The Repression.—The sequel to the "Spa Fields Riot" is typical of the Government's methods. Such of the rioters as were arrested were put on their trial for high treason, on the testimony of professional spies to the effect that it had been their intention, if successful, to seize the Tower of London. The jury of hard-headed London citizens contemptuously refused to convict 1817-1820

1817 the prisoners, and the Government was forced to set them at liberty ; but the incident was used as a pretext for suspending the Habeas Corpus Act—the great safeguard of the Briton against arbitrary imprisonment.

This unhappy period came to a climax with the famous “Peterloo massacre” and the “Six Acts.” During the August of 1819 a mass meeting was announced to take place in St. Peter’s Fields, Manchester. Its purpose was to advocate “universal suffrage,” and the chief speaker was to be “Orator” Hunt. Men, women, and children came in processions from all the industrial districts round, with banners flying and bands playing ; they were quite unarmed, and were mostly wearing their Sunday clothes. At the sight of such a great multitude the magistrates grew alarmed, and sent a detachment of yeomanry to arrest Hunt (whose voluntary surrender they had refused the night before). In the dense crowd the horsemen found a difficulty in forcing their way through to the platform, and there was some jostling and cursing. The magistrates took fright. Was this going to become a violent mob like that which stormed the Bastille ? They ordered some squadrons of regular cavalry which they held in reserve to charge to the rescue of the yeomanry. Within a few moments the square was cleared ; nothing remained but half a dozen dead bodies, a litter of women’s bonnets and shawls, and the maintainers of public order wiping the blood off their swords.

It is possible to find some excuse for the action of the magistrates. A crisis like this might well have an unnerving effect on minds disturbed by the alarming reports and admonitions of the Home Office ; but it would be difficult to justify the action of the Government in hastening to thank the magistrates and to congratulate them on their promptitude. And, as usual, the incident was made the pretext for further measures of repression.

Several of the “Six Acts” which were rushed through Parliament during the following session were reasonable enough. One of them, indeed, has never been repealed—that which forbade “the unauthorised training of persons in the use of arms and the practice of military evolutions.” Nor could the Act which forbade the possession of dangerous weapons be considered unduly harsh in the circumstances of the time. But the difficulties thrown in the way of public discussion of political questions by the Seditious

Meetings Act amounted almost to a suspension of the Englishman's time-honoured right of Free Speech. It required persons who proposed to hold a public meeting to obtain permission from a magistrate and to lodge caution money of £100, to be forfeited if anything passed at the meeting which in the opinion of this magistrate was of a seditious or irreligious tendency. The Opposition induced the Government to limit the operation of this measure to five years. Another Act placed corresponding restrictions on the publication of pamphlets and newspapers, which was an equally serious inroad on another of our hereditary privileges—the Freedom of the Press.

It is perhaps significant that the one really desperate and murderous attempt at organised revolt of the period followed this repression, and must be regarded rather as its consequence than as its cause. It was known as "The Cato Street Conspiracy," 1820 from the place (near the Edgware Road) where it was hatched. It was to begin with the murder of the chief ministers when they were at a dinner-party, to proceed to the seizure of the Government buildings, and to end with the establishment of a Republic. The whole scheme was inept in organisation as it was wild in conception. The police knew all about it long before it came to a head. They let the conspiracy ripen, and then arrested the ringleaders at one stroke. Five of them were executed and five more transported for life.

§ 29. Was the Government to Blame?—It would be easy to exaggerate the extent of the Government's responsibility for the unhappy condition of the country during these bad times between 1815 and 1822. We may deplore that Ministers should have found no more enlightened way of dealing with the situation, but we must remember that it was largely due to circumstances over which no one had any control—to the most ruinously expensive war that had ever been waged, coinciding with a drastic change in the social system which would in any case have had a debasing effect on the condition of the working class. The real nature of that change was beyond the comprehension of the wisest men living in the midst of it, and the studies which enable men to understand and deal with such problems were then in their infancy. The cardinal doctrine of political economy as it was then understood was that wages and prices must be left alone to find their own level (though with characteristic inconsistency the land-owning Parliament declined to take this course in the matter of

corn prices) ; and as we saw in the last chapter, the writings of Malthus served to confirm the ruling class in the view that the condition of the proletariat was the inevitable result of the decrees of an inscrutable Providence ; it was the duty of every one to bow to these and to put up with the troubles inseparable from the station in life to which he had been called. Those who tried to rebel against this divinely ordered scheme of things were both wicked and foolish. It is easy nowadays, with our increased knowledge and experience in such matters, to see how mistaken many of these ideas were ; but there is no reason to suppose that any other body of men would have used the powers of government more wisely at that time.

Another consoling aspect of the story is this : that the suspension of Habeas Corpus, and the passing of the Seditious Meetings Act, however reactionary and tyrannical they may seem, were measures that could only be taken in England, for the simple reason that England was the only country in Europe where protection from arbitrary arrest and the right of free speech existed at all. A foreign observer would have been amazed to learn that until 1819 there was no law in England to prevent a revolutionary army from obtaining military arms and equipment and drilling in the light of day to overturn the constitution. Even in the days of "The Six Acts" the Englishman enjoyed a godlike freedom compared with his contemporaries in France, Germany, Italy, Spain, or Russia.

Nevertheless, the Ministry got increasingly unpopular, and by 1820 they were about the best-hated set of men who have ever ruled this country. All their prestige as "the men who won the war" had long since been forfeited. Their action over the St. Peter's Field massacre, in particular, seemed to make a great impression on the public mind. Many respectable and sober-minded members of the middle class, who had hitherto felt that the methods of the Government, even if sometimes ugly and un-English, might be necessary to cope with the evils of the day, began now to murmur against Castlereagh and Sidmouth, and to say that if they could not keep order without the sabring of women and children, it was time for them to make way for ministers who could. The incident was commonly nicknamed "The Battle of Peterloo" in mocking contrast to the distinctly more glorious engagement in which the British Army and the British Government had been concerned a few years before.

§ 30. "The Queen's Affair."—Shortly afterwards their prestige got another severe blow from their own action in what was known as "The Queen's Affair." In 1820 the blind, deaf, mad old George III was relieved of his sad existence, and was succeeded by his son, who had for the past ten years acted as Regent. His sycophants called him "The First Gentleman in Europe," but he was really a cowardly, false-hearted, selfish, sensual, corpulent old fop, for whom nobody could feel any respect or affection. He had treated his wife with the most callous cruelty, and she had lived abroad for twenty years. She may not have had the most decorous or dignified manners, but her life was one of stainless purity compared with that of her husband. Now that he had come to the throne she returned to England and demanded recognition as his Queen-Consort. George was horrified at such impudence, and demanded that his ministers should force through Parliament a "Bill of Pains and Penalties" to prevent her from 1820 taking any part in public life. The Cabinet obediently brought the measure forward, but nine-tenths of the nation took the Queen's side in the very undignified squabble, and several members of the Opposition won great popularity by their attacks on the conduct of the Government. Canning, one of the ablest members of the Ministry, resigned rather than share the responsibility for the prosecution, and the majority in favour of the second reading of the Bill sank to five. At this stage Lord Liverpool was compelled to withdraw it altogether, to the intense disgust of the King. The Queen might have become a permanent centre of opposition to both King and Government, but the difficult situation was relieved by her death the following year, His Gracious Majesty declaring that this event gave him "the happiest 1821 day of his life."

Thus the monarchy itself, the very core of the constitution, was brought into contempt, and this fact, together with the harsh and crooked ways of the Government, brought the country to the verge of revolution at the beginning of the new reign. This calamity was averted by the existence, within the Tory party itself, of a number of men who had some understanding of the evils of the day and of how they might be remedied. Circumstances now gave this group the ascendancy in Lord Liverpool's cabinet.

## SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How would you have dealt with the social unrest of this period if you had been in Lord Sidmouth's place ?
2. Write an imaginary speech for Lord Castlereagh, introducing one of the Six Acts in the House of Commons.
3. Show how the two revolutions were the parents of Radicalism.
4. Compare the manifestations of popular discontent after 1815 and after 1918. Compare also the methods of dealing with it by the Government.
5. Can you justify the employment of *agents provocateurs* in any circumstances ?
6. Write an article for Cobbett's *Political Register*.

## CHAPTER VI

### The Enlightened Tories

"What! shall reviving thralldom again be  
The patched-up idol of enlightened days?  
Shall we, who struck the lion down, shall we  
Pay the wolf homage, proffering lowly gaze  
And servile knees to thrones? No: prove before ye praise!"  
BYRON, *Childe Harold*.

UNFLINCHING repression had sufficed to stave off disaster for a few years, but it could not have been successful in the long run. Beneath an exterior of comparative calm the fires of revolution were sullenly smouldering. If that revolution had actually broken out it might well have swept away the whole system of monarchical government and aristocratic privilege. The effect of such a disaster would have been felt far beyond these islands, for the world owes much to the example of Britain's steady development of the arts of government. This calamity was averted by a timely change in the complexion of the Ministry. The new men, while firmly supporting the existing fabric of the State, were not impervious to the idea that some modification in the laws and in the methods of administration were called for by the new conditions. They did not carry their reforms very far, but they made a beginning, and they raised hopes that more would follow. Three of them, indeed, laid the foundations of the general policy of their respective departments upon which their successors built for the next half-century.

§ 31. The Emergence of Canning.—Castlereagh, who was the most prominent figure in the earlier phase of Lord Liverpool's Administration, and Canning, who occupied a similar position in its later phase, had both served a sort of political apprenticeship under Pitt, and they had been in office together several times during the past twenty years; but there was little love lost

1770-  
1827



§ 16 between them. They seemed to personify the two sharply contrasted periods of their master's career. Just as Castlereagh represented "The Pilot that Weathered the Storm," resolute for victory and suspicious of disaffection at home, so Canning represented the Pilot before the storm had arisen, the Pitt of the 'eighties, whose plans for reform had not yet been overlaid by his preoccupation with a great war, and his fear of the revolutionary spirit.

1809 The two men differed greatly, both in nature and in talents. Castlereagh was slow-witted, tenacious, and almost inarticulate in speech; he had never swerved from what he considered to be his duty, despite growing unpopularity and ridicule. Canning, on the other hand, had a lively and flexible mind; he was a brilliant orator, with a vein of showy rhetoric and a "pretty wit" that sometimes made him appear flippant. Canning considered Castlereagh slow, stupid, and obstinate: Castlereagh regarded Canning as superficial, flashy, and untrustworthy. They had quarrelled many years before over the Walcheren Expedition, and had actually fought a duel. Lord Liverpool's best gift as a politician was his tact in holding together men of different temperaments and inducing them to work in harmony; but even he was unable to reconcile these two incompatible spirits. Canning again held subordinate office for a time, but he felt more and more out of sympathy with the Old Tories who formed the inner circle in the Cabinet, and this feeling came to a head in 1820, when he resigned rather than support the Government over the "Queen's Affair." He mortally offended George IV by his attitude, and his political prospects seemed to be for ever blighted. Giving up all hopes of a successful career at home, he accepted the Governor-Generalship of India, which chanced to fall vacant at the time, and which was offered him by the Government as a sort of honourable retreat from political ambitions.

§ 29

1822

But a day or two before he was to sail—he had already arrived at Liverpool ready to embark—a tragic event changed all these plans. Castlereagh, worn out by work and worry, took his own life in a fit of desperation. His death placed the Prime Minister in a difficult position. The only possible man to succeed to the office of Foreign Minister was Canning, who had made a great mark in that position fourteen years before, but who had now made himself personally obnoxious to the king. It was only after prolonged resistance, countered by threats of resignation,

that George was induced to give office to the man who had resisted the Bill of Pains and Penalties. "The fairest ornament of the Crown," the King wrote to the Prime Minister in a letter intended to be shown to Canning, "is its power to grant its pardon and favour to an individual who has incurred its displeasure." Canning cancelled his Indian appointment with delight. He felt himself to be the very man the circumstances of the day required, and he was soon able to show that his self-confidence was justified.

He succeeded not only to Castlereagh's Foreign Secretaryship, but also to his position as Leader of the House of Commons. "The Jolterheads," as the back-bench Tory squires were nicknamed, disliked him as a low-born upstart (his mother had been an actress), but his popularity in the country gave the Government much-needed support. Liverpool was getting old and infirm, and it might almost be said that it was a Canning Ministry that ruled England for the next five years.

§ 32. **The New Spirit in Home Affairs.**—Other changes took place at about the same time, for the retirement of Sidmouth and several other "Old Tories" gave an opportunity for a general re-construction of the Cabinet. Robinson became Chancellor of the Exchequer, Huskisson took charge of the Board of Trade, and Peel succeeded Sidmouth at the Home Office. These men all represented the new middle-class leaven in the Tory party; they were all men with a clear-headed capacity for business, and they all left a definite mark on English history.

Robinson might almost be called "The Morning Star of Free Trade," bearing in mind that the planet disappears below the horizon before the dawn of the real morning. With the close co-operation of Huskisson he set to work to bring some order into the chaos of indirect taxes which were strangling industry. The duties on raw materials were reduced, trade with the new colonies was fostered, and all restrictions on commerce with Ireland were removed. Huskisson's own particular contribution was a modification of the Navigation Laws. These were designed to encourage British shipping by prohibiting goods being brought to British ports save in British ships, or in ships of the country whence the goods came. The United States and Prussia had recently retaliated by excluding British ships from their ports, and Huskisson now obtained power to negotiate with foreign Governments on a basis of reciprocal withdrawal of restrictions.

Huskisson and Robinson were by no means adherents of any

§ 75

theory of Free Trade; they merely improved the working of their departments in detail. Nor were their achievements permanent in effect, for the black night of fiscal confusion set in again under the Whigs in the 'thirties. But they had shown the way, and they had aroused an interest in the subject—particularly in the mind of one of their colleagues who was destined in after years to take up the policy in a far bolder and more definite fashion.

That colleague, however, had his hands pretty full at the moment. Peel was opposed to all such constitutional changes as giving votes to the middle class, or civil equality to the Catholics; but at the Home Office he helped to develop the spirit of the New Toryism which he was destined to crystallise ten years later in the policy of the Conservative party. He forthwith abolished the wretched spy-system, and then set about removing the barbarities of the criminal law. Never again was the Government guilty of sending out agents amongst the people to work up cases for prosecution; never again was an Englishman hanged for stealing a joint of meat.

This criminal law was characteristic of the frame of mind in which the ruling class had for many years undertaken its legislative duties. They made no attempt to understand or remove the causes of crime; their only thought was to repress it by savage punishments. An average of two offences were added to the list of capital crimes every year: such heinous offences as "Personating a Chelsea Pensioner," or "Setting fire to London Bridge," for instance. This severity defeated its own ends, for juries often found prisoners "Not Guilty" in defiance of the clearest evidence, rather than cause a fellow-creature to be hanged for some trifling offence; and judges habitually reprieved dozens of those whom they condemned to death. The penalties against poaching seemed to make the life of a rabbit more sacred than that of a man, quite in the spirit of the Forest Laws of William the Conqueror.

1824-  
1826

For nearly twenty years Samuel Romilly had fruitlessly struggled, by writings and by parliamentary action, to arouse a more enlightened spirit on the subject. He had died in 1819, apparently without having achieved anything at all; but he had educated public opinion, and Peel had now little difficulty in passing a series of Acts which simplified the whole of the criminal law, did much to improve the prison system, and abolished the capital penalty for more than a hundred offences. Some Members

of Parliament prophesied that a terrible outbreak of murder and robbery would result; but, as a matter of fact, crime has steadily diminished as penalties have been lightened, all through the following century. The improvement was largely due to the new Police Force which Peel instituted a few years later, in place 1829 of the inefficient and corrupt old watchmen; for the prevention of crimes is better than their punishment, and the certainty of a moderate penalty is a more effective deterrent than a severe one which there is a good chance of evading. But the main reasons for the diminution of crime have been the spread of education, the diffusion of enlightened ideas, and the gradual raising of the standard of living throughout the community.

§ 33. Canning and Continental "Liberalism."—These re- 1822-1827 forms owed a good deal to Canning's support, but it was in his own department at the Foreign Office that "Enlightened Toryism" had its fullest play. He may be said to have established the "liberal" tradition which persisted so long in British Foreign Policy. After Waterloo, the Powers had tried to restore the *status quo ante bellum*, and the Czar had brought forward a scheme for a "Holy Alliance," which later developed 1818 into a sort of religious League of Nations, but was really an organisation to keep in check the revolutionary and nationalistic spirit amongst the peoples of Europe. Castlereagh had been in general sympathy with these aims, but he would take no part in repressive measures, and he had called the Alliance "a piece of sublime mysticism and nonsense." Canning went further. Whenever a suitable opportunity occurred, he intervened on the other side. In this policy he had British public opinion almost solidly at his back, for it was felt that the continental peoples deserved every sympathy and encouragement in their efforts to attain to something like our own standard in the matter of constitutional government. There was rather a self-righteous assumption of superiority about this attitude, but the nations of southern Europe owed much to British support during the next fifty or sixty years in their struggles for "Liberty" (by which they chiefly meant government by a representative assembly). The names of Canning, Palmerston, John Russell, and Gladstone were almost as highly honoured amongst them as those of their own national heroes.

The first national revolts against the restored despots were 1821 in Naples and Spain. The power of the Austrian Empire was 1823

invoked to crush the first of these, and France received a "mandate" from the Holy Alliance to do the same in Spain. In each case the fruitless rebellion was followed by ruthless persecution, but circumstances at home prevented Canning from actively interfering. When a similar situation arose in Portugal, however, a British force was sent to Lisbon, where it remained for some years, and effectually prevented any attempt by foreign Powers to put down the "constitutionalists."

1808-  
1825

§ 34. *The South American Republics.*—The next question which arose was about the Spanish colonies in South America. The colonists had refused to recognise the rule of the Bonaparte usurper in 1808, and in the years which followed they had tasted the sweets of political and commercial freedom. Up to then their industries and trade had been restricted by their mother-country in much the same way as those of Britain's North American colonies had been before the War of Independence. When the Bourbons were restored to the throne of Spain in 1815, the colonists had no mind to return to their old allegiance to a played-out monarchy, which subordinated their interests to its own. They therefore set up a number of independent republics.

1749-  
1831

The most famous hero of this movement was Bolivar, the founder of the Republic of Colombia. He owed much of his success in the revolt to the help of a little band of British volunteers, mostly soldiers and sailors discharged after the close of the Napoleonic War. Something similar took place farther south, where the new Republic of Chile maintained its independence largely through the aid of Cochrane, one of the most brilliant and daring of the sea-dogs of Britain. He had been deprived of his commission in the Royal Navy by a miscarriage of justice not unconnected with his Radical politics—he was a close friend and supporter of Cobbett—and he became a sort of naval free-lance. To this day the flagship of the Chilean Navy is usually named "El Amirante Cochrane."

While the Holy Alliance was considering what steps it should take to bring the rebels back to their allegiance to the King of Spain, Britain and the United States let it be known that if any such action were taken they would actively support the new republics. In adopting this policy the two Governments had more selfish reasons than a mere abstract love of liberty, for the valuable South American markets would be closed to their trade if the colonists lost their independence. Canning was very anxious

that America should take joint action with Britain in the matter, but President Monroe anticipated him, with the famous statement of policy which has ever since been known as the "Monroe Doctrine." He declared that his Government would regard it as "an unfriendly act," for any outside Power to interfere with any State on the American continent. Canning's action, if later in point of time, was even more decisive. He formally recognised the Republics as independent States; and although the army had been too drastically cut down after Waterloo to admit of a successful intervention on the Continent, the navy still retained its supremacy, and it could easily have prevented any armament being sent across the sea. No open threat of such action was required to convince the Bourbons that they could have no hope of coercing the recalcitrant colonists; and they abandoned the idea.

When called upon to defend his policy in Parliament, Canning used a characteristically bombastic phrase, which quite carried away his hearers and silenced all opposition. Recalling the fear that the successful French intervention in Spain would lead to a revival of the old "Family Compact" between the two Governments, he said that he had "called a New World into existence to redress the balance of the Old."

§ 35. *Missolonghi and Navarino*.—While these events were taking place across the Atlantic, the Greeks were in revolt against their Turkish rulers. Here, however, the situation was more complex, and its difficulties have involved Europe in wars and rumours of wars almost ever since.

The Balkan peoples had been for centuries misruled by their Turkish conquerors. They were all members of the Greek Orthodox Church, of which the Czar was the head. It was, therefore, only natural that they should have Russian support in their struggle against the barbarous tyranny of unbelievers, especially as the Czars were ambitious to extend their dominions at the expense of Turkey, and had long cast covetous eyes on Constantinople as a possible capital of the Russian Empire. But this attitude was entirely opposed to the spirit of the Holy Alliance, which would not countenance a rebellion of any description, not even a revolt of Christian subjects against Mohammedan rulers. Thus the Greek revolt split the Holy Alliance from top to bottom; for Russia would not allow Austria to support the Sultan, and Austria was equally jealous of any increase of Russian

influence in the Balkans, where she had ambitions of her own.

Meanwhile, the sympathies of the upper classes in England (as well as those of France and the United States) were enthusiastically engaged on behalf of the insurgents. Men brought up in the exclusively classical education provided by the public schools and universities in those days remembered "the Glory that was Greece," and looked upon the modern Greeks as descendants of Æschylus, Pericles, and Plato. Thousands of volunteers flocked from England to support the rebels, despite the difficulties placed in their way by the Foreign Enlistment Act.

The most famous of these was Lord Byron, a young aristocrat of brilliant literary talents, who had been the spoilt darling of Fortune and of Society in his youth, but had later suffered an eclipse of popularity. He had gone into voluntary exile in Italy, where he continued to pour forth poetical works which won him a great reputation—greater perhaps in France and Germany than in his own country. His political leanings are exemplified in the quotation at the head of this chapter, where he likens the restored monarchs (the poem was written in 1816) to wolves. He now devoted all his resources, mental, moral, and monetary, to the cause of the Greek insurgents. He accepted the rather prosaic post of Commissary-General, in which he displayed unexpected powers of organisation. His death at Missolonghi of a fever made the Greeks look upon him almost as a martyr in the cause of their liberty. For many years later a British traveller in the remoter parts of Greece was always sure of a welcome if he announced himself "a compatriot of Lord Byron's."

1824

Canning refrained from any official interference for some years, for he was as mistrustful as Metternich, the Austrian Minister, of the growing power of Russia. The struggle went on with fluctuating fortunes until 1826, when the Sultan, despairing of ultimate success with his own resources, called in the aid of his vassal, Prince Mehemet Ali of Egypt. The latter arrived with a fresh fleet and army, which acted with such ruthless severity that it really seemed as if the design was to exterminate the inhabitants altogether. In face of these atrocities Canning made an agreement with France and Russia for a joint intervention. A composite fleet from the three navies under the command of Admiral Codrington was sent into Greek waters, in the hope that its mere presence would restrain the barbarities of the Turks and

1826

Egyptians, and induce the Sultan to come to terms with his rebellious subjects. But fate ruled otherwise. The Russo-Franco-British ships were anchored alongside those of the Turko-Egyptian fleet in Navarino Bay, when a chance shot from a 1827 Turkish gun acted like a spark in a powder magazine, and within half an hour the entire Turkish fleet was at the bottom of the sea.

Meanwhile, there had been a change of Government in Britain. Canning was dead, and the new Prime Minister, Wellington, was such a whole-hearted reactionary that he hated to see his country supporting rebels, even in these circumstances. He spoke of the incident at Navarino as "an untoward event," and took an early opportunity of withdrawing our forces altogether. The French and Russians followed it up by further action on land, however, and a little later the Sultan was compelled to recognise the independence of Greece by the Convention of London.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain exactly how Canning started the general trend of British Foreign Policy in the nineteenth century.
2. Canning is often given the credit for having "smashed the Holy Alliance." How far do you think this view is justified?
3. Biographical Study: Sir Samuel Romilly.
4. In what, exactly, did the "enlightenment" of the New Tories consist? Illustrate their policy.



## CHAPTER VII

### Religious Equality

“For let me impress on you, O English reader, that no fact has been more deeply stamped into us than that we can do nothing with an English Government unless we frighten it. . . . Under such circumstances as prevail in England reforms are produced only by catastrophes followed by panics in which ‘something must be done.’”—G. B. SHAW, Preface to *John Bull's Other Island*.

UNTIL 1829, the full political rights of citizenship in these islands were the exclusive privilege of members of the Church of England. Roman Catholics and Protestant Nonconformists were not eligible for any important position in the State, in Municipalities, in the Law, or in the Services. We British have a gift for making imperfect and illogical institutions work satisfactorily by using moderation and good sense in carrying them out; and in England and Scotland these disabilities were not felt very acutely. In Ireland, on the other hand, the whole position was coloured by the fact that four-fifths of Irishmen were of the Catholic faith, and their exclusion from office gave a monopoly of power to a small minority of the population. The jealousies and animosities thus aroused were a continual and increasing source of distraction and danger to the Kingdom.

The “No Popery” prejudices engendered in the sixteenth century were very slow in dying out, and the prevailing opinion both in Parliament and in the country at large was averse to the idea of religious equality. But politics are as uncertain a game as war or cricket; and that very section of the dominant political party which had got into office on the strength of its determined opposition to the Catholic claims found itself compelled to force through Parliament a Bill which granted them, although by so doing it committed political suicide.

The story of this singular episode in our history is the subject of the present chapter.

§ 36. *The Misgovernment of Ireland.*—Englishmen take a justifiable pride in their capacity for ruling “the lesser breeds without the law,” but any tendency to excessive self-satisfaction in this regard will be wholesomely checked by a study of Irish history. The roots of the trouble go far back, but even during the eighteenth century we can find causes enough and to spare for the hatred and mistrust with which the English Government was regarded by the great majority of the Irish nation. For the first part of that century a determined attempt was made to bribe or terrify the Irish into giving up their religion. The “Penal Code” prevented Catholics from having votes, or joining any profession, or possessing arms, or having their children educated in their own faith. At the same time the short-sighted jealousy of “the predominant partner” deprived the whole Irish people, Catholic and Protestant alike, of any hope of agricultural or commercial prosperity; for the “Commercial Code” forbade her to export her produce even to England or the colonies. Moreover, the Parliament of Dublin was even less representative of the nation than that which sat at Westminster, for it was limited to members of the Church of Ireland, who made up barely a tenth of the population.

By the end of the century the cruder barbarities of the Codes had disappeared, and the Catholics had extorted the right to 1782 vote at elections; but they were still ineligible for seats in the Parliament, and the whole administration was in the hands of a little group of Protestant place-hunters, who were greedy, insolent, and corrupt. Then came the French Revolution; and its inspiring doctrines (especially “the land for the people”) gave force and direction to Irish national aspirations, until they burst forth into open rebellion in 1798. Religious animosities played a very small part in that affair. It aimed at a truly democratic and national form of government, free from the control of the narrow oligarchy which was supreme in England and which ruled Ireland through the “garrison” at Dublin Castle.

The revolt was very easily crushed, and in 1800 the Irish Parliament was bribed and threatened and cajoled into extinguishing itself by passing the Act of Union, under an implied promise from Pitt that a Catholic Emancipation Act should speedily follow. If this promise had been fulfilled, and especially if (as was suggested) the State had provided for the support of the Catholic priests, the subsequent history of Ireland would not

have been so tragic. The fanatical Protestantism of the King prevented this happy consummation, however; and Pitt extricated himself from his false position by resigning. A year or two later he took office again, with the tacit understanding that he was not to disturb His Majesty's peace of mind by bringing up the dreadful subject again.

In Ireland a "Catholic Society" was founded in 1802 to agitate for Emancipation, but for a long time its activities were confined to a narrow circle among the educated classes. The peasantry were more concerned with practical grievances, such as the land system under which they could only get hold of the plots on the cultivation of which their very lives depended by promising impossible rents. Compared with such troubles as these, political rights and privileges seemed of secondary interest, until the demand for religious equality was taken up by the greatest of Irish agitators, Daniel O'Connell.

1775-  
1847

§ 37. "The Great Liberator" *alias* "The Big Beggarman."—O'Connell was admirably adapted by nature for the part he was called upon to play. He was a successful barrister of good family and education, quick-witted, astute, and not over-scrupulous in his professional conduct. He had all the gifts of the popular orator—a commanding presence, a magnificent voice, and a magnetic personality. He thoroughly understood the minds of his fellow-countrymen, and could play upon their passions with the hand of a master. He brought home to them the idea that the laws which prevented Catholics from being Members of Parliament or holding offices under the State were an insulting stigma on them, and that there could be little hope of their ever getting their practical grievances redressed until they could send to Parliament, and have as magistrates and officials, men who shared their own faith and traditions.

In 1822 O'Connell founded the Catholic Association. He gained the support of the clergy, who have ever since played such an important part in Irish politics; and through the agency of the priests a "Catholic Rent" for the support of the agitation was collected from the pence voluntarily subscribed week by week from all classes of the population. He set his face resolutely against revolutionary violence. His method was to address great public meetings, usually held in the open air, and often attended by thousands of people. He looked to the report of these meetings to convince the English Government of the deter-

mination and solidarity of the Irish nation in their demand. The good order which was maintained was a striking proof of his complete control over the minds and actions of his supporters. Indeed, the implied threat, the suggestion of overwhelming force only kept in check by his forbearance, was a more potent and terrifying menace than any number of little riots and disturbances, which would have given the Government an opportunity for drastic military repression.

§ 38. "Catholics" and "Protestants" in Parliament.—English politicians had for a long time been divided on the question. The Whigs and Radicals were nearly all in favour of Emancipation, but so also were several important members of the Tory party, such as Canning and Huskisson. On the other hand, the great majority of the Tories, including Peel and Wellington, were bitterly opposed to it. Those who favoured the claims were nicknamed "Catholics," while their opponents were called "Protestants," and gloried in the name. Lord Liverpool was himself a "Protestant," but he succeeded in holding his Cabinet together by keeping the question in abeyance, on the ground that the matter was not sufficiently urgent for the Government to be obliged to have a definite policy upon it.

But it became more and more difficult to maintain this detached attitude in face of the ever-growing agitation in Ireland. When Canning succeeded Lord Liverpool as Prime Minister in 1827, Peel and Wellington resigned from the Cabinet; they felt that to serve alongside a "Catholic" colleague was one thing—to serve under a "Catholic" Prime Minister would be quite another. The cabinet-making difficulties which ensued helped to worry Canning, who was already in ill-health, into his grave before the year was out. An attempt to carry on the Canningite tradition by Lord Goderich (our old friend Robinson translated to the House of Peers) was a failure, and early in 1828 the Duke formed a Ministry of the old-fashioned reactionary type. Peel returned to the Home Office and became Leader of the House, but most of Canning's old friends and supporters declined to remain members of the Government, now that its character had changed. The King, who had discovered in his old age that he had religious scruples like his father's, breathed freely again with a definitely "Protestant" administration in power, and so did the Tory majority in Parliament.

§ 39. The Repeal of the Test Acts.—Hardly had the Duke 1828

and his friends established themselves in office when Lord John Russell, a young member of one of the great Whig clans, brought forward a motion for the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, which required all candidates for office under State or Municipality to be communicant members of the Church of England.

As a matter of fact, the Acts had long been a dead letter. They had been passed during the wave of bitter intolerance which followed the Restoration in 1660, but during the last fifty years Methodism had taken such a strong hold, especially in the industrial districts of the North, that it had become impossible to maintain the restriction. There were always hundreds of Nonconformists in official positions, and a Bill of Indemnity was passed each year exempting from punishment those who had broken the law during the past twelvemonth by neglecting to pass the "test." The ruling class had preferred this makeshift to a straightforward repeal of the Acts, for it served to mark the social and political inferiority of the dissenting sects.

This stigma the Whigs were now bent on removing. Not only did they take Toleration as one of the watchwords of their party; they had special reasons for taking the matter up, for a large part of their political supporters were Nonconformist townsmen. Their case was too strong for Parliament to resist, and the Repeal was carried in both Houses with very little difficulty. Many Churchmen supported it to be rid of the scandal of seeing candidates for office coming to Holy Communion with the sole object of "qualifying," while others were glad to see the subject out of the way so that they could concentrate on resisting the Catholic claims.

1828      § 40. The Clare Election.—Events were moving too fast for them, however. The aggressively "Protestant" character of the Wellington Cabinet made O'Connell redouble his agitation, and the country was seething with hostility to the English Government. The Lord Lieutenant at the time of the Duke's accession to power was his elder brother, the great Marquis Wellesley, who had made such a mark on the history of India. He was well known to be in favour of the Catholic claims, and one of Wellington's first actions was to recall him and appoint in his place Lord Anglesey, a vigorous "Protestant." A few weeks of residence in the country, however, sufficed to convince the new Lord Lieutenant that his predecessor had been right, and that Emancipation could only be withheld at the imminent risk of civil war.

This rapid conversion naturally alarmed the Duke, and when Anglesey's reports were confirmed from other quarters it began to dawn on him that something would have to be done.

At this critical juncture O'Connell took a dramatic step. He determined to stand for Parliament. A vacancy had just occurred in County Clare, where the member had to seek re-election on becoming a cabinet minister in place of one of the Canningites who had resigned. O'Connell, being a Catholic, would of course be unable to take his seat in Parliament, but this would only make his return the more striking as evidence of the strength of the movement. Moreover, Vesey Fitzgerald, his Ministerial opponent, was a great landlord in the constituency, and hitherto nobody had ventured to challenge the political influence of those who held such power over the peasants' very means of subsistence. Not only so, but Fitzgerald had always been a model landlord, and was very popular with his tenants. When O'Connell defeated him by an overwhelming majority, therefore, no member of the Government could ignore the significance of the event. It proved that the cause for which O'Connell stood outweighed every other consideration in the minds of the people. At any moment he might show himself unable or unwilling to restrain their impulse towards rebellion; then a terrible massacre might ensue, the country be deluged with blood and the Protestant ascendancy wiped out for ever. This fear for the safety of their Protestant friends in Ireland was an argument which convinced some of the bitterest opponents of Catholic Relief.

§ 41. **The Duke's Hand is forced.**—The Government thus 1829 found themselves in a very awkward position. It was their opposition to Emancipation which had given them the power they were now compelled to use to grant it; with the dreadful alternative of civil war if they refused. Most statesmen would have resigned rather than have made themselves responsible for measures they were pledged to oppose, but Wellington's outlook was rather that of a soldier than of a statesman. So long as the King desired him to hold office, so long would he do so, no matter what distasteful duties fell to his lot. In warfare, if a general could not defend his position, he did not throw up his command: he retired to some other in which he might be more successful. The only result of resignation would be that the King would be forced to fall back on a Whig or Canningite Ministry, which would certainly bring in a drastic Relief Bill at once. So the Duke held

on to office, and induced Peel to do the same. Peel was very anxious to resign, for he would be in a ridiculous position when he had to introduce the Bill in the House of Commons, inasmuch as he had, a few years before, ousted Canning from the coveted representation of the University of Oxford, on the very grounds that he was a firm "Protestant." But he was indispensable to the stability of the Government, and he finally gave way to Wellington's argument and entreaties.

The prestige of the Duke sufficed to drive the Bill through Parliament, though many of his followers were on the verge of rebellion against his betrayal of their principles. As for the King, he began by talking quite in his father's vein: never would he consent to such a measure—it would be a breach of his coronation oath—he would rather abdicate and retire to Hanover. When the Duke actually resigned, however, on the ground that, despite his loyalty to the Crown, he could not be responsible for the situation in Ireland unless the Bill were passed, it came home to George that the only alternative would be still less to his liking. He gave way, and Wellington resumed office.

The Catholic Relief Act which thus became law in April, 1829, threw open to Catholics all offices except those of Sovereign, Regent, Lord Lieutenant, and Lord Chancellor. The only other restriction placed upon them was that they had to declare, on taking office, that they would do nothing to subvert "The Church of England as by Law Established."

§ 42. *The Immediate Results of the Act.*—An argument which induced many opponents of the Bill to let it pass was that by thus swallowing their principles they would at any rate purchase freedom from further disturbances in Ireland. In this they were grievously disappointed; but the fact that the desired effect was not brought about, even for a single session, was largely due to their own short-sighted lack of generosity. Firstly, they accompanied Relief by another Act which limited the franchise in Ireland to householders who paid £10 or more in rent. Hitherto the qualification had been 40s., and this new Act disfranchised four-fifths of the Catholic voters. It may have seemed a cunning move, thus to take away with one hand what they were giving with the other, but this sort of thing is not statesmanship, and the result was renewed bitterness and mistrust of the English Government.

Again, while it was only natural that the Tories should hate

O'Connell, who had placed them in a painful dilemma, it was as foolish as it was ungenerous to ignore him, the most prominent member of the Irish Bar, in the first appointments of Catholics to be King's Counsel; to pass over in a similar way all his leading supporters; and to declare that he would have to be re-elected before he could take his seat for County Clare. He retaliated by commencing a new agitation. This time he took for his object the repeal of the Act of Union; and the Government's conduct only served to strengthen his case. He was now able to point out to his audiences that Ireland could not trust to England for fair dealing, and that the only way to get concessions from the English Ministers was to extort them by force. Peel and the Duke were quite aware of the un wisdom of the "pinprick" policy, but they had been compelled to agree to it in order to get the House of Lords to pass the Relief Bill.

Thus the Government had done themselves no good in Ireland, while in England they were ruined, for the episode shook the Tory party to its foundations. By his aggressive "Protestantism" the Duke had forfeited the support of the Canningites, amongst whom were most of the able young men of the party; and now by giving way to the Catholic claims he had lost the confidence of the "fox-hunting squires" who formed its backbone. The integrity of the Church of England, combined with hatred for Papists and Dissenters, had long been one of the main articles of their political creed. They did not realise the difficulties of the Government; all that they realised was that the Duke had "betrayed" them and had surrendered to the enemy. All trust in their leader was gone; and the Tory Party, which a few years before had seemed as if it would monopolise the offices of State for ever, was tottering to its fall.

But the final blow was given to it by another force which all this time had been daily gathering strength—the demand for Parliamentary Reform.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain how the question of Catholic Emancipation smashed the Tory Party.
2. Do you consider that Wellington and Peel were justified in passing the measure they had taken office to resist?
3. Illustrate from Lord Liverpool's treatment of this question the doctrine of Cabinet cohesion.
4. Write a dialogue between the Duke and an obstinate "Jolterhead" Peer on the necessity for passing the Bill.



## CHAPTER VIII

### The End of the Oligarchy

"In the winter of 1824 there set in a great flood upon the town of Sidmouth—the tide rose to an incredible height—the waves rushed in upon the houses, and everything was threatened with destruction. In the midst of this sublime and terrible storm Dame Partington, who lived upon the beach, was seen at the door of her house with mop and pattens, squeezing out the sea-water, and vigorously pushing away the Atlantic Ocean. Mrs. Partington's spirit was up; but I need not tell you that the contest was unequal. . . . She was excellent at a slop or a puddle, but she should not have meddled with a tempest. Gentlemen, be at your ease, be quiet and steady! You will beat Mrs. Partington!"—SYDNEY SMITH.

THE General Election of 1831 caused greater political excitement in this country than any other event in its history. For some weeks the country was on the brink of civil disturbances far more general than those of 1642–49, or of 1688–89. The question of the day was the overthrow of that preponderance of political power which had hitherto been enjoyed by the great landowners and their dependants.

The effects of this monopoly have been discussed in the earlier chapters of this book; we must now consider more closely how it had arisen, what it consisted of, how it was brought to an end, and why at this particular time.

§ 43. What it was that had to be Reformed.—In Plantagenet and Tudor times the Sovereign had sent "writs" for the election of members of Parliament to whatever boroughs he thought fit. Each county had always returned two members, but the King had a wide discretion as to which towns should be parliamentary boroughs for any particular election; and more than once the Tudors had "packed" Parliament, when they had any special reasons for wanting one favourable to their designs, by sending writs wholesale to townships on the Royal

estates (such as those in Cornwall), where they could control the votes of the electors. In Stuart times this lax method came to an end, and places which had sent members to the Parliaments of James I were thenceforward considered to have a legal right to representation.

The two centuries which had elapsed since then had seen many changes in the relative importance of various parts of the country. Flourishing towns had decayed into mere hamlets; there was one parliamentary borough which now consisted of nothing but a grass-covered mound; two members were returned for another which had long been under the North Sea, owing to the erosion of the East Anglian coast. On the other hand, manufacturing towns had sprung up in the North and Midlands where before there had been only "the dreary, dreary moorland," but there was no provision for these new populations to be represented in Parliament. The Industrial Revolution had greatly accelerated this process of change during the sixty years immediately preceding 1830.

The right to vote at elections was distributed with a similar lack of justice and wisdom; for it had never been granted in accordance with any definite scheme, but had grown out of very varied local conditions. In the counties there was a simple and uniform system: all holders of land to the value of 40s. or more per annum had the vote. Here the only fault was the undue influence of the great landlords. But in the boroughs all sorts of chaotic and out-of-date "franchises" had been handed down by tradition from the Middle Ages. In some places all occupiers of separate dwellings had votes; these electors were known as "potwallopers." In others the franchise went with particular tenements, the inhabitants of which were called "burgage tenants." There were other boroughs, again, where all were voters who paid "scot and lot"—that is to say, rates and taxes; while in a good many the vote was confined to members of closed corporations, to which new members were either co-opted by the existing members, or were nominated by the lord of the manor, whenever a vacancy arose. Some seats were practically in the gift of the local landlord, and were therefore known as "Nomination Boroughs." In others there were so few voters that it was easy to bribe the whole electorate, and these were appropriately known as "Rotten Boroughs."

A few examples of the anomalies in parliamentary representa-

tion will illustrate the position. More than half the seats in the House of Commons were in the gift of 150 great landlords—mostly themselves members of the House of Lords. There were only 160,000 electors in a population of about 16,000,000. Cornwall, an ancient Royal demesne, returned as many members as Scotland. Yorkshire returned two members, while Lord Lonsdale returned nine. Old Sarum had no population at all, but was represented by two members nominated by the Lord of the Manor; while Birmingham, with a quarter of a million inhabitants, had no members at all.

§ 44. The Three Classes of "Reformers."—There had been little or no change either in the distribution of seats or in the qualification of voters since the time of Cromwell. By the end of the eighteenth century the injustice and absurdity of the existing system (if indeed it could be called a system at all) was becoming more and more apparent, and there gradually emerged three distinct classes of the community who sought to reform it.

§ 16 We have already seen how from 1780 onwards "Parliamentary Reform" became a characteristic doctrine of the Whig Party, and how Pitt, himself a Whig in those early days of his career, had brought in a Reform Bill in 1785 which had been defeated largely by personal and political jealousies. He would probably have brought the matter up again but for the outbreak of the Revolutionary War in 1793. Henceforward all his energies were absorbed in that; and the fear lest the "red fool fury of the Seine" should spread to this country so completely took possession of the minds of the ruling class that they were determined to resist all constitutional change whatever. For the next thirty years and more the Whigs were in a hopeless minority, but they always kept "Reform" as an essential part of their political creed, to be carried into effect whenever they should get into office again.

§ 22

Meanwhile the Industrial Revolution was proceeding apace, and one of its results was the rise of another class of "reformers" in the country. This consisted of the manufacturers and merchants whose energy and brains and capital were doing so much to expand the national resources, together with the professional men—bankers, doctors, lawyers, architects—who were dependent on the new industries. They had all a vital interest in the good government of the country, but were shut out of all direct influence over it.

But the loudest cry for Reform came from the working class. The Industrial Revolution had so altered the conditions of life and labour that the laws were quite out of date; but a Parliament which represented only the privileged few was not likely to deal with these problems in the interests of the unrepresented many. This feeling was intensified, moreover, by the new doctrine that every man had a natural right to a share of political power. Hence arose the third reforming element, the Radicals. Cobbett had set forth their demands in his *Political Register*, § 25 Hunt had thundered them forth from a thousand platforms, and they were inscribed on many of the banners which were borne in procession to the fatal field of "Peterloo."

The borough-mongers were so strongly entrenched in power that it would only be possible to compel them to surrender their valuable monopoly by a tremendous display of determination by all these three elements combined; but for many years there was too much distrust between them for such co-operation to be possible. The Whig aristocrat disdained the *parvenu* middle-class man, who fully reciprocated the feeling; and both alike dreaded any increase of power for the working-man, lest it should lead to "Jacobinism"—the violent overthrow of Property, Law and Order, and Religion.

§ 45. The Hour Approaches.—During the early 'twenties 1820 much of this mutual hostility died out. The St. Peter's Field Massacre had shown to what a depth our boasted British liberties § 28 had fallen under the old oligarchical regime; and it aroused a general feeling that it was high time that the whole system came to an end. For a few years the rule of the "Enlightened Tories" 1822- took the sting out of the agitation, since it seemed to afford a 1828 hope that sooner or later some scheme of gradual reform would be adopted. But when, in 1828, the old reactionary type of § 38 Toryism got back into power in the person of the Duke of Wellington, the three progressive elements were stimulated into renewed activity, and began to look to each other for support. Cobbett enjoyed a second period of popularity and influence, and his aid was now welcomed by the Whigs.

About 1830 several fortuitous circumstances brought matters to a head. Firstly, the Whigs had hitherto expended much of their political energies on advocating Catholic Emancipation, but this phase came to an end with the passing of the Relief Bill in 1829; henceforward they could concentrate on Reform.

Secondly, the death, early in 1830, of George IV removed an implacable opponent of the movement. He was succeeded by his brother William, a good-natured, simple-minded, rather stupid old gentleman, who inclined to Whiggishness in his political views. Thirdly, in view of the General Election which always follows the accession of a new sovereign, the Prime Minister had to make an official statement of the Tory Government's attitude on the subject. If he had consented to some moderate redistribution of seats and votes the Canningites would have rejoined him, for they were far from being radical reformers—they had resigned from his Ministry merely because they thought it was dangerous to flout public opinion by refusing even to consider Reform and Emancipation. The Duke, however, quickly dispelled any such hopes. He declared in the House of Lords that he regarded the British Constitution as the most marvellously perfect political contrivance ever devised by the wit of man, and that he would never consent to the smallest interference with it. This speech at once made the split in the Tory party permanent, and cemented the ranks of the reformers. It could no longer be doubtful that the days of the Old Toryism were numbered.

Then came the "Revolution of July" in Paris, which drove out the last of the Bourbon Kings, Charles X, and established a constitutional monarchy under his cousin, Louis Philippe, Duc d'Orléans. This revolution was quite a respectable middle-class affair, and resulted in the political predominance of respectable middle-class people. Thus a twofold example was set to the British nation. For one thing, it could never be tolerated that the French should lead the way in political development; if the *bourgeois* could be entrusted with the vote in France, so could the corresponding class in England. For another, it had now been proved that the regime of aristocratic privilege could be overthrown without violence or bloodshed.

Thus the Reform movement gathered strength and unity, until, late in 1830, the Duke's Ministry was defeated in the House of Commons, and he resigned.

1831 § 46. The Great Reform Election.—The King then commissioned Earl Grey, the veteran leader of the Whigs, to form an administration. During the sixty years that the party had been in opposition its doctrines had become more democratic, but its *personnel* remained much the same—it was still a group

of aristocratic families. There was only one person of doubtful social standing in Grey's cabinet, and that was the lawyer Brougham, whose brilliant advocacy of Reform made it impossible to leave him out—and even he was given a peerage. The other chief ministers were Lord Durham, Lord John Russell, Lord Althorpe, Lord Melbourne, Lord Palmerston, and Lord Stanley. The last three were among the Canningites who had left Wellington in 1828, and Palmerston had been for eighteen years Secretary at War in the Administration of Lord Liverpool.

The committee which was appointed to draw up the Reform Bill had a difficult task. If their measure made sweeping changes, the landed interest—and particularly the House of Lords—would certainly reject it; but if it did not make such changes, it would not arouse the enthusiasm in the country which would be necessary to drive it through Parliament. The Bill which Lord John Russell introduced in the House in April, 1831, does not seem to us to-day to be very revolutionary, but it was far more drastic than the "borough-mongers" had any stomach for. They were thoroughly alarmed, and rejected it by a substantial majority. Thereupon the Prime Minister dissolved the Parliament, and "appealed to the country."

Then followed the most exciting General Election in our annals. All over the country there were meetings, processions, speechifyings, arguments, often riots and bloodshed. Public opinion in general was overwhelmingly in favour of Reform. In most of the counties, and in such of the boroughs as had a large proportion of free voters, the candidates opposed to it had little chance; but in the "rotten" boroughs the struggle was often desperate. The "owner" of the borough naturally exerted all his influence to get his candidates returned, lest his political power should be torn from him; while the voter himself had very strong motives impelling him in the same direction, for his vote was a very valuable asset, especially at election times, and he had much to hope, as well as much to fear, from his landlord. These voters, therefore, had to be induced partly by argument, and partly by the fear which casteth out fear, to vote for the other side.

The main argument brought forward in favour of the Bill was that timely repairs to the Constitution would not destroy it, but on the contrary would prolong its life, for they would save it from the wrath of the revolutionary spirit. The Tories, on

the other hand, pointed out that the present state of things had stood the test of time; that the very variety of the franchise assured that all classes would be represented somewhere in the country; that logical uniformity had never been a feature of British traditions, and that the nomination boroughs gave opportunities for bringing into Parliament men who might never have got there if they had had to fight open elections—Pitt, Fox, Burke, Canning, and Peel were all cases in point. As for the argument about the determination of the people, if you were going to start legislating to pacify popular clamour, where would you be able to stop?

The result of the election was a considerable increase in the Whig majority, and when the Bill was introduced in the new House it was passed readily enough. There was now a new difficulty to be overcome, however—the House of Lords. The Peers rejected the Bill by a decisive majority; and thus began a new and even more exciting phase of the struggle.

1832 § 47. How the Peers were coerced.—The country soon showed that its determination to have its Bill was shaken not a whit by the action of the Peers. Serious disturbances of the peace took place; at Bristol, for instance, the entry into the city of a judge who was a prominent opponent of Reform led to a riot in which public buildings were destroyed. With the conviction that the flowing tide was with them, the Ministry brought in a third bill early in 1832. This time the Peers altered their tactics: instead of openly rejecting the Bill, they passed amendments which would have had the effect of wrecking it.

Two alternatives were now open to Lord Grey. He could resign, on the ground that the action of the House of Lords prevented his carrying into effect a measure which he deemed essential to the welfare of the country; or he could threaten (with the consent of the King) to make a batch of new peers from amongst his own friends, sufficient to outvote the opposition in the House of Lords. William had from the first been but a timid sort of Reformer, and he had already been much perturbed by the boldness of the Government's proposals. He therefore accepted their resignation, and sent for the Duke of Wellington.

Then the whirlwind was let loose. Popular indignation knew no bounds. Overwhelming demonstrations against the new Ministry and in favour of the Bill were held all over the country. Public buildings were burned by the mob at Nottingham and

Derby. The Duke's own windows were smashed. Civil war seemed to be in sight. Wellington, with his soldierly notions of loyal service to his sovereign, might have faced even this possibility, but he found that even the army itself was disaffected, and that there was danger that regiments would mutiny rather than bear arms against their fellow-countrymen in such a cause. The situation was impossible, and the Duke frankly told the King so. Grey and Brougham were sent for, but they declined to resume office until William had given his promise in writing that he would support them over the creation of peerages. Naturally, the aristocracy did not want to see their House invaded by dozens of new Viscounts and Barons. They therefore gave way. The Duke and his followers withdrew from the House the next time the Bill was brought in, and it became the law of the land, amidst universal rejoicing in June, 1832. The stage-coach drivers who carried the good news had their whips decorated with gay ribbons, and hardly a town or village in the length and breadth of the land but celebrated the glorious event with bon-fires and beer-barrels broached in the streets.

§ 48. What the Great Reform Bill actually did.—And what was it that all the excitement was about ?

The Bill left the number of members the same. Boroughs with fewer than 2,000 voters lost their separate representation, and were merged in the surrounding county. Those with fewer than 4,000 lost one member, and became "single member boroughs." The 156 seats thus set free were given to the new towns and to the more populous counties. Furthermore, the old chaotic tangle of franchises was swept away; in future only householders who paid £10 or more a year in rent were to have the right to vote. Thus the immense majority of working-men were still without rights as citizens, for £10 was a much higher rental then than it would be to-day. Indeed, they had less voice in the government of the country even than before, for under the old regime thousands of poor men had been "burgage-tenants" or "pot-wallopers."

It was some little time before the lower classes realised that their enthusiasm had been exploited to force through Parliament a Bill which ignored all their claims and interests. Naturally, very few of them had examined the Bill with a coldly critical eye during the great agitation: they readily accepted what they were told about it—that it was going to "give everybody every-



thing" and would be the beginning of the end of all their troubles. When the cold truth dawned on them—that their precious Bill merely transferred the preponderating power in politics from the landed aristocracy to the monied *bourgeois*, and that it left the lower strata of society rather worse off than before, there arose a new agitation for a wider and completer reform of parliamentary representation which would recognise the right of every one who paid taxes to have a voice, however indirect, in the spending of them. With this agitation, which was focussed in what was called "Chartism," we shall deal in a subsequent chapter.

#### QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How was it that this step towards democracy was gained without the violence which occurred in similar crises in France?
2. What other instances have there been in history of the threat to create peers?
3. Sketch the history of the Whig Party from 1760 to 1830.
4. Write a dialogue between a Whig canvasser and a Tory voter in a "Rotten Borough" in 1831.
5. Why did the Reform Bill come when it did, and not at an earlier or a later date?

## CHAPTER IX

### The Reformed Parliament

"From the beginning of the eighteenth century till pretty near the time of the Reform Bill, the chief duty of the Ministry was not the passing of laws, but the guidance of national policy. . . . All this is now changed. Every speech from the throne at the opening of Parliament has, for nearly a century past, contained a legislative programme. Amendment of the law is supposed to be the chief duty of the Ministry."—A. V. DICKE, *Law and Opinion in England*.

MANY of those who had taken up the cause of Parliamentary Reform with so much enthusiasm had regarded it merely as the necessary prelude to overhauling the whole law of the land. The Industrial Revolution had changed the very basis of Society. Competition had been substituted for tradition as the chief bond between man and man; an active-minded and intelligent middle class had grown up; the population had increased with portentous rapidity, and the typical Englishman was no longer a tiller of the soil, but a factory hand living in a town. The old machinery of government and the old laws were now altogether behind the times. The whole social organisation was painfully out of joint, and had the anti-Jacobinical resistance to reforms been much further prolonged there would doubtless have been a violent revolution. True, the process of change had been begun in a tentative sort of way in the 'twenties, but something much more drastic was required than the Oligarchy could be expected to carry out.

Thus the new Parliament met with a great task before it, and its character and methods had a profound effect on the subsequent development of our commonwealth.

§ 49. The Character of the Reformed Parliament.—We have seen how the lower classes of the community felt that they

§ 48 had been cheated by the Great Reform Bill, but thirty-five years passed before they gained any extension of the franchise. During those thirty-five years the middle class was the dominant power in the Constitution. Some people say that the country enjoyed better government during this epoch than at any other stage in its history. However this may be, it is undeniable that a marked advance was made both in general enlightenment and in material prosperity.

It must not be supposed, however, that there was any very striking change in the *personnel* of Parliament or of Cabinet. For long after 1832 these remained almost as aristocratic as they had been before. The newly enfranchised middle classes had no time to take an active part in politics. For the most part their choice lay merely between different representatives of the old ruling caste. Certainly, the Reform Bill had made a considerable difference in the position of these candidates, for they no longer sat by the favour of some territorial grandee, and they had to gain the support of their constituents by pointing to their party's achievements in the past, or (more readily, perhaps) to its promises of legislation for the future. But for many years the House of Commons contained much the same sort of men as had sat there in the old days; and the two most active promoters of reform during the 'thirties were Lord John Russell, a scion of the ducal house of Bedford, and Lord Ashley, the heir to the Earl of Shaftesbury. Certainly, there was a little group of highly cultured "intellectuals," especially the Benthamite Radicals, whose influence was due simply to their abilities and character; but they were the exception that proves the rule.

The statesmen who carried through these multifarious reforms were profoundly influenced by several doctrines and principles which were current at the time, and we shall not be able to grasp the trend of their activities without some understanding of these ideas.

§ 50. The Principles of the Reformers : (a) Utilitarianism.  
—First of all, there was *Laissez-Faire*, the view, to which we have already alluded, that men are the best judges of their own  
§ 22 interests, and that the law should interfere as little as possible with the liberty of the individual, and particularly that no attempt should be made to regulate wages or conditions of labour. They must be left alone to find their own level according to the inexorable law of supply and demand. This principle had been

generally accepted as an axiom of government for half a century, but it was now being somewhat modified by the teaching of a famous political philosopher named Jeremy Bentham.

Bentham had been trained for the Bar, but he had no taste <sup>1748-</sup> for the excitements and publicity of an advocate's career. He <sup>1832</sup> had private means, and he lived in retirement, devoting his remarkable intellectual powers to thinking out and expounding a new theory of legislation. He wanted to see the laws of England re-modelled on a definite system in accordance with definite principles, instead of being a chaos of statutes and customs and fictions which had grown up haphazard.

The system he advocated was based on two broad principles.

Firstly, while he quite accepted the general idea of *Laissez- § 23* *Faire*, he saw that the desires and interests of one section of the community must often come into conflict with those of another section, and that when this happens the law must step in to adjust these rival claims. Often in the past the privileged minority had been able to impose their will on the powerless majority; but Bentham now laid down the principle that in such cases the law should aim at "The greatest good of the greatest number."

Secondly, the true test by which all laws, past, present, and future, should be judged was not whether they confirmed the ancient prescriptive rights of some person or class of persons, nor whether they agreed with any abstract ideas about the rights of man. The merits of any law or institution could be judged simply by the answer to the question: Did it *work* well? This doctrine, which gave to Bentham's followers the nickname of "Utilitarians," seems to us to-day to be so obviously just and sensible as to be hardly worth discussing, but that is only because Bentham's ideas have taken such complete possession of our minds. Such views would have been indignantly repudiated by either Burke or Robespierre.

Bentham's ideas were set forth in a series of books which display marvellous industry and ingenuity. They first began to appear in 1785, but they did not begin seriously to influence the course of legislation until after 1830. It often happens that the political ideas of one generation have to wait for fulfilment until the next, for it is only young men who take up new ideas, while it is only older men who are in a position to carry them out. Bentham lived just long enough to see the passing of the Great

Reform Bill which was the indispensable preliminary to the re-modelling of our legal system. No such elaborate codification as he designed ever took place, for we British prefer patching up old institutions to scrapping them and starting afresh; but the legislation of the next half-century showed his influence in all directions. The authors of these reforms were not all avowed "Utilitarians"—many of them would have scorned the epithet; but their ideas were profoundly modified by the Benthamite gospel without their always being conscious of the fact.

§ 51. The Principles of the Reformers : (b) Humanitarianism. — The events which took place in France between 1789 and 1794 were largely based on that conception of the importance of the individual which had long been growing up in Western Europe. In England the same general idea developed in the form of a religious movement: the Wesleyan revival brought it home to men that all are equal in the sight of God, and that each particular human soul stands in need of a personal redemption.

The material and spiritual welfare of the individual thus became a conscious end both for statesmen and for religious teachers, and a desire to alleviate the lot of their fellows arose in the hearts of men. Manifestations of this humanitarianism had already appeared in the prison reforms of John Howard; in the establishment by Robert Raikes of schools for poor children; in the commencement of missionary endeavour for the conversion of backward races by the Church of England Missionary Society and by the British and Foreign Bible Society (both founded at about the beginning of the century); in the attempt to improve the lot of the factory children by the Apprentices Act of 1802; in the abolition of the slave trade in 1807; in the softening of the Criminal Code by Peel in the 'twenties; and in the series of laws passed about the same time which caused lunatics to be treated as sick persons rather than as malefactors.

This altruistic passion now had full sway. It is not difficult to trace the effect of the evangelical revival in the spread of such an essentially Christian feeling, but many of those who were most active in promoting the passing of humane laws were not orthodox Christians at all—they were Radical Utilitarians who drew their inspiration rather from the writings of Locke and Rousseau than from the New Testament. But the fact that the

philanthropic impulse came from two contrasted sources only strengthened its effect; and this effect is everywhere apparent in the legislation of the reformed parliament.

§ 52. "His Majesty's Opposition."—Now that parliamentary candidates had to outbid each other with electoral promises, neither party was able to maintain itself in power over such long periods as the spell of Whig rule from 1715-70, or that of the Tories from 1770-1830, for promises are easily made and easily broken. During the thirty-five years between the two Reform Bills parliamentary majorities were usually either small in numbers or composite in character—sometimes both. The hold of ministers on office became comparatively precarious, for every Government begins to decline in favour from the moment it takes office. All that it does, and all that it does not do, is bound to offend some section of the community: and in politics attack is easier than defence.

Thus the Opposition may oppose the doings of the Ministers, but the sobering thought that within a few years or months the see-saw of the polls may put them in their rivals' shoes makes them careful not to indulge in reckless criticisms or demands, lest they be suddenly called upon to go and do better. Hence the justice of the half-jocular expression "His Majesty's Opposition." It suggests quite truly that the critics of the Government can play almost as useful a part in the Constitution as the Government itself. It is a valuable feature of our parliamentary system that half our ablest statesmen are in a position to question and check the actions of the half that are in office, while at the same time they are restrained from a course of mere vindictive wrecking.

Thus, after 1832 more and more of the public business came to be carried on by agreement between the political parties. Naturally, most of the legislation is passed on the initiative of the Ministers, for not only do they command a majority in the House, but they also control the parliamentary time-table, so that their leader can give special facilities for the passing of any particular measure, or prevent its ever coming to a hearing at all. Still, he usually comes to some understanding on the matter with the leading members of "the other side of the House." In any case, Ministers are bound to reply to questions and criticisms on their doings, and they are often willing to modify their policy at the suggestion of their opponents. More-

over, it is seldom that a "division" in the House of Commons finds all the members of one party in one lobby.

One striking example of this co-operation between the parties is seen in the Royal Commissions which are appointed from time to time. Though not by any means unheard of before 1832 they become a much commoner feature of our governmental methods after that date. When the House is convinced either by Ministers or by some private member that legislation is required to remedy some evil, it carries a motion that the matter be referred to a Royal Commission. The members of this Commission are chosen by the Government in consultation with the leaders of the Opposition. Amongst them will be representatives of all parties, and often persons who are not members of Parliament at all. The Commission sits at Westminster, sends for witnesses and examines them, and consults in private as to the best way of dealing with the situation. Its conclusions are drawn up in the form of a "Report" to the Crown. This is printed, together with the evidence in what is called a "Blue Book," and is circulated amongst members in order that they may be able to form their own conclusions upon the subject. Legislation in accordance with the Report may or may not follow; that depends upon how far the House is convinced by it.

1831-  
1834

§ 53. The Whigs and "The Tithe War."—The nine years of Whig rule which followed the passing of the Great Reform Bill were marked by bold and striking innovations in the law of the land, and in studying some of these in later chapters we shall see several examples of the parliamentary methods just described. Meanwhile, let us take a panoramic view of the general course of political events during the period.

It seemed at first as if the authors of the Reform Bill might keep for years the favour of the electors they had enfranchised; but as a matter of fact they got into difficulties almost at once. The source of the trouble was that whence flowed a large proportion of the anxieties of English statesmen for nearly a century to come—Ireland. O'Connell was now himself in Parliament, at the head of a little band of Irish members—nicknamed "O'Connell's Tail"—whose aim it was to keep their country's wrongs in the foreground of the parliamentary picture. Their ultimate object was "Repeal"—the undoing of the union between England and Ireland, and the setting up of a separate

§ 52

parliament in Dublin once more ; but they pressed even more urgently for a relief from the burden of "tithe." This was a sort of rate levied for the support of the Established Protestant Church, which the Irishman hated, not only as heretical, but as the symbol of the foreign (that is to say, English) domination. The Catholic Church taught that it was a sin to subsidise heresy, and the peasants lived always so near the border-line of starvation that this burden inflicted cruel hardships on them. The collection of the money was often resisted by force, and the result was the 1831-epidemic of violence and bloodshed known as "The Tithe 1835 War."

What could the Government do ? "No Popery" was still an ingrained prejudice even amongst the Whigs, and the fact that emancipation had just been granted made them all the more unwilling to make any further concessions to the Catholics. In the end they tried a dual scheme : repression combined with concession. They lightened the cost of the Protestant Church by abolishing a number of superfluous bishoprics ; but then the awkward question arose as to whether the endowments of the sees were to be preserved for the Church, or to be used for the general good of the Irish people. For weeks on end parliamentary business was held up by acrimonious discussions on this subject of "Appropriation." The struggle was as bitter in the Cabinet as in the House, and four Ministers resigned, including Lord Stanley. 1833

The repressive measure had equally disastrous results to the solidarity of the Government. A Coercion Bill had placed large districts under martial law and prohibited public meetings. It proved effective enough in stopping the "war" during the year that it was in force, but when the time came for it to be renewed another split in the Cabinet took place. A certain section (including Althorpe and Brougham) made a bargain with O'Connell by which Coercion was to be dropped in return for his suspending the Repeal agitation. When old Lord Grey found out what had been going on behind his back, he resigned the premiership in disgust. This was an unfortunate close to the career of the last survivor of the days of Fox and Burke ; but perhaps he consoled himself with the reflection that he had led his party back to place and power after thirty years of wandering in the wilderness, and that he had seen the triumph of the traditional Whig policy of conservative parliamentary reform. 1834



1835 § 54. Peel's "Hundred Days."—The appetite of old King William for reforms and reformers had been very easily satisfied, and by this time he was yearning for peace and quiet. When Lord Melbourne, who had succeeded to the uneasy post of leader in a divided Cabinet, made a mild suggestion that he would not be averse to resigning, if the King thought fit, he was somewhat surprised when William eagerly took him at his word and sent him personally to Wellington with a summons to form a Tory Ministry. The Duke suggested that Peel should be Prime Minister, with himself as Second in Command, and this was the arrangement ultimately made.

This unconstitutional action of the King's, in driving a Cabinet from office while it still commanded a majority in the House, was a great mistake even from his own point of view; for it stiffened the backs of the Whigs, cemented their ranks, and gave them the advantageous position of fighting for constitutional and parliamentary government against the arbitrary power of the sovereign. Peel dissolved Parliament as soon as he had formed his Cabinet, and issued an address to the electors which was afterwards called "The Tamworth Manifesto," which set forth the ideals of the new Conservative party which he was building up out of the wreckage of the old Toryism. To maintain "the respect for ancient rights, and the deference to prescriptive authority" was still a central feature of his policy, but he expressed his willingness to "make a careful survey of institutions, undertaken in a friendly spirit . . . combining the correction of proved abuses and the redress of real grievances." In the ensuing General Election Peel gained a sufficient number of seats to make an even balance between the two chief parties; but this gave the real power in Parliament into the hands of "O'Connell's Tail." In these circumstances the Whigs entered  
1835 into what was known as "The Lichfield House Compact" with O'Connell. If the Irish would support them in the House, they would undertake to put through a Bill for the commutation of tithes. The resultant combination was too strong for Peel. He was defeated after just a hundred days of office, and returned to his congenial task of building up his party in opposition.

1835-1841 § 55. "The Weakest Ministry on Record."—Thus the Whigs returned to office, but not really to power. They dragged out six years of precarious existence, dependent on the good-

will of O'Connell. They strove to fulfil their pledge to him, but the hostility of their own supporters both in Lords and Commons prevented their granting any favours to the Irish Catholics, and "The Great Liberator" returned to his agitation against the whole system of English government in Ireland. Nor was this the whole of their troubles. In reconstructing his Cabinet after the Conservative interregnum, Lord Melbourne had passed over Brougham, who had been a factious and quarrelsome colleague; but it was doubtful whether he was a sharper thorn in the side of the Government in the Cabinet or outside it. He was bitterly chagrined at his exclusion, and became the leader of the Radical opposition, a position in which his dexterity both in debate and in intrigue enabled him to do them a great deal of harm. Even more injurious to the Whigs was their own muddling of the national exchequer. Year after year they were unable to make income and expenditure balance, until it really seemed as if bankruptcy were in sight.

One circumstance which enabled them to continue in office long after they had really lost the confidence of the House and of the country was the death of William IV in 1837 and the accession to the throne of his niece, a girl of nineteen. Lord Melbourne was just the man to fulfil the duties of Prime Minister to a young and inexperienced Queen. He instructed her in the duties of a constitutional sovereign with such genial patience, with such tact and fatherly good humour, that the thought of parting with him for the frigid rectitude of Peel became abhorrent to her. Once, in 1839, when the Whig Ministry fell to pieces through sheer feebleness, she was compelled to send for Sir Robert, but she immediately fixed a quarrel on him over the "Bedchamber Question," which turned on his demand that her Whig ladies-in-waiting should be dismissed on his accession to office, and she eagerly accepted his resignation almost before he had selected his Cabinet. Thus she was able to return to her "dear Lord Melbourne, so good and kind."

How the Whigs struggled on under an increasing load of popular disfavour for another two years, until Peel felt that the moment had come for him mercifully to apply the *coup de grâce* and turn them out: this will be described in Chapter XIII of this book. We must now turn to some of the great legislative achievements of the years immediately following the passing of the Reform Bill.

## QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Can you give any recent illustrations of the methods of government described in Section 52.
2. Trace the twofold parentage of Humanitarianism.
3. Write an article for a Review, as if from the pen of Bentham, in support of the Great Reform Bill.
4. Give an account of the early history of the Irish Party in the House of Commons.

## CHAPTER X

### The Revival of Religion

"They made their appearance in the Lower Rooms, and here fortune was more favourable to our heroine. The master of the ceremonies introduced her to a very gentleman-like young man as a partner; his name was Tilney. He seemed to be about four or five and twenty, was rather tall, had a pleasing countenance, a very lively and intelligent eye, and, if not quite handsome, was very near it. His address was good, and Catherine felt herself to be in luck. . . . He talked with fluency and spirit, and there was an archness and pleasantry in his manner. . . . Mr. Allen had early in the evening taken pains to know who her partner was, and had been assured of Mr. Tilney's being a clergyman, and of a very respectable family in Gloucestershire."—JANE AUSTEN, *Northanger Abbey* (1816).

THE quotation at the head of this chapter brings home to us the fact that the position of the clergy in this country has altogether changed during the last hundred years. Mr. Tilney is a fashionable young man among other fashionable young men; his profession appears to make no more difference to his position in society than if he were a young barrister or a subaltern in the army. To-day we should feel that the fact that he was a clergyman was the first and most essential fact about him.

The deepening and broadening of religious feeling which underlies this change of attitude towards the Church had several forms, motives, and aspects. It had a profound effect on British character and history during the nineteenth century, and we must now trace its origin and early manifestations.

§ 56. The Great Awakening.—The general attitude of educated Englishmen towards religion during the eighteenth century was one of well-bred cynical indifference. This was perhaps a natural reaction after the intense religious enthusiasms of the previous age, though doubtless the newly-aroused interest in the physical sciences had something to do with it, as well as the general lack of respect which the clergy had brought upon

themselves by the place-hunting lack of principle so common amongst them in the days of "The Vicar of Bray." Whatever the cause, the spiritual characteristics of the time were cool, clear-headed common sense. The chief mission of the Church was felt to be the inculcation of good conduct as the logical outcome of good sense; men took broad and tolerant views as to doctrine, and looked upon its usefulness rather than its truth as its chief claim to acceptance.

But this attitude could not endure for ever; it left some of the most fundamental human feelings unsatisfied. The yearning for a real and vital spiritual life which lies deep down in the hearts of most men was aroused by the evangelical revival which was set on foot by Whitefield and the Wesleys. These men were Anglican clergymen who strove to call up a new spirit within their Church—a spirit of intense personal belief in the power of the Redemption to save each separate human being. The individual must be made to realise that his nature was utterly depraved, and that until he was convinced of his sin and had acquired faith that the Atonement could redeem him from its penalties, his soul lay under the most awful condemnation. For polite indifferentism these preachers substituted fervid enthusiasm; for decorous reasoning they substituted emotional oratory. The ordinary clergy regarded this sort of thing as "ungentlemanly," and refused to lend the revivalists the use of their pulpits. They were thus compelled to preach in the open air. During the fifty years of his apostolate John Wesley rode a quarter of a million miles and preached forty thousand sermons, the first often at five o'clock in the morning. Ultimately he was compelled, much against his will, to adopt a separate Church organisation, which has since grown into the largest of all the Protestant Churches in the world.

The success of this revival was greatly augmented by the effects of the two great revolutions. Firstly, the new industrial system congregated masses of humanity in places where the Established Church had no organisation for caring for their spiritual welfare. Here was a virgin field for Nonconformist activities, and Wesley's provision for lay-preachers (to which he was driven by the exclusiveness of the Church authorities) gave an opportunity to working-men who felt that they had a mission to bring their fellow-creatures to salvation. This is one of the main reasons why the Free Churches have to this day kept such a hold

over the industrial populations of the North and Midlands. Secondly, after the French Revolution, Atheism and loose ideas about religion generally, were associated in the minds of the ruling class with Jacobinism. The "Reign of Terror" seemed to be an awful warning of the blood-curdling depravity which resulted from religious scepticism, and serious views on religion became quite fashionable.

Aided by these circumstances, Wesley's revival began soon after his death to have the effect he had always hoped for—a quickened religious life and a deeper sincerity within the Church of England itself.

§ 57. The Evangelicals.—It was not long before this new 1800- spirit in the Church began to make itself felt in political circles. 1860 William Wilberforce was its first prominent representative in Parliament. His life's work was the abolition of negro slavery from the British overseas possessions; and the successor to his parliamentary influence, Lord Ashley, devoted his life to the welfare of workers at home in England whose lot was almost as hard. Another sphere of activity in which the evangelical impulse was very strong was the establishment of Missions to preach the Gospel to the backward races of mankind. Of these the most famous was the Church Missionary Society, 1799.

The movement did a great deal of good to the national character, and a certain amount of harm. It raised the standard of public life, and gave statesmen a higher motive than mere expediency. The old Puritan theology which it revived brought spiritual uplift and stoical endurance into thousands of squalid homes, for one of its characteristic doctrines was that it was the duty of everybody (but especially the poor) to be contented with that condition of life to which it had pleased an all-wise Providence to call them. Indeed, this aspect of its influence was perhaps the most important of all, for it restrained the revolutionary spirit which was more than once on the very point of breaking out during those terrible years of suffering while society was adjusting itself to the changed economic conditions.

But what this sort of spirit gains in fervour it loses in narrowness. Deeming it a necessary article of faith to believe in the literal truth of every word of the Bible, they were bitterly opposed to the progress of modern science when its conclusions seemed to throw doubt on the verbal accuracy of such passages as the first chapter of Genesis. Again, they were often very intolerant of

people who differed from them in creed: hence much of that hatred of Catholicism which has kept England and Ireland apart all through the century. Yet again, we owe to them the "Victorian Sabbath," and the general idea that religion is a sanctimonious affair, instead of its being associated with all that is joyous and beautiful in life.

§ 58. "Erastianism."—Nevertheless, in the eyes of most men, the Church remained a very worldly institution, and the average parson was hardly to be distinguished from a layman except by his white tie. Even the evangelical minority who preached and prayed with fervour, and set up a rigidly Puritanical standard of conduct, did not attach any special sanctity to the priestly function. It was a cardinal point in their doctrines that the Gospels contained all that was necessary for salvation (hence their nickname), and that no intermediary between the soul and its Maker was either possible or necessary.

This was the general attitude in ecclesiastical matters of most of the leading politicians of the reform period. They were attached to the Church, but they whole-heartedly supported the Revolution settlement of 1689, which had definitely subordinated it to the State, and which had placed the appointment of its Bishops and Deans in the hands of the King's Ministers. This "Erastian" view of the relationship between Church and State was clearly brought out in 1833, when, in order to economise the revenues of the Church in Ireland, the Whig Government abolished an Archbishopric and ten Bishoprics, and when, at about the same time, they set up a Judicial Committee of the Privy Council as a Supreme Court of Appeal for all cases of ecclesiastical patronage and doctrine; and again, a few years later, when a permanent Ecclesiastical Commission was set up to take over and administer the revenues of the Church.

But there were some to whom such actions as these seemed to be a blasphemous disregard of the Church's true position. They felt that she was much more than a mere department of State for the due regulation of public worship. They believed that her function was to hand down through the ages the legacy of the Holy Spirit left behind on earth by her Founder; and that her priests had mystic powers conferred on them by their ordination, which made them links in the divine succession stretching back to the Apostles. The Church of England had been corrupted by the amatory intrigues of Henry VIII and by the purely political

settlement of 1689, but her clergy had preserved and handed on their sacred powers, even when they were unconscious of them. Obviously, men who held these views could not admit that a committee of lawyers was competent to interpret the Church's doctrines, nor that it was in the power of a Cabinet of laymen—who might be Dissenters or Atheists—to institute or abolish Bishoprics according to the political exigencies of the time.

§ 59. "The Tractarians."—A million acorns are formed for 1833- every one that grows into an oak tree, and so it is with ideas. 1841 This view of the position of the Church was vaguely present in many minds, especially after Sir Walter Scott had depicted mediæval Catholicism in such picturesque hues, in his poems and novels; but it was its germination in the soul of one particular man that bore fruit. John Keble was a country clergyman of 1792- lofty ideals and saintly life. He had written a volume of 1896 devotional verse called *The Christian Year*, consisting of medita- 1827 tions appropriate to the Festivals and Saints' Days of the Church. His ideas were enthusiastically adopted by a pupil named Hurrell Froude, who carried them up to Oxford, where they were taken up by Edward Pusey and John Henry Newman, both clergymen of the Church of England, the former a don at Christchurch, the latter at Oriel. These men soon gathered round them a group of ardent followers among the undergraduates and the younger clergy in residence. They published a series of *Tracts for the Times*, which expounded Church history and doctrines according to their views. These tracts got as far as No. 90, but no farther. From the first they had aroused hostility in the University (much more definitely connected with the Church at that date than it is to-day), for disturbing elements of this sort were no better liked by the average clergyman in 1834 than they had been in the time of Wesley. It was clear that these "Tractarians" shared much of the theological outlook of the Roman Catholics; might it not be that they were secret converts, seeking to pervert the doctrines of the Anglican Church under cover of her Orders? The controversy grew bitter, and before long the University was aflame with party feeling. The Tractarians were a small minority, but they had some brilliant dialecticians amongst them—especially Newman, a man of great intellectual power, of fine character 1801- and of gentle disposition, and one of the greatest writers of 1890 English prose of the century.

But Tract No. 90 was the last straw. In it Newman sought



to justify his claim to be still an orthodox member of the Church of England by pointing out there was no doctrine in the Thirty-nine Articles which he would not be able to accept even if he were a Catholic. This seemed to be proving just a little too much; his arguments only served to convince his opponents that he was a disguised Papist. The University authorities compelled him to withdraw the tract, and he refrained from any further publications. A little later he was received into the Catholic Church, of which he ultimately became a cardinal; doubtless he had long been treading the spiritual road thither without knowing it. His conversion was followed by that of many others, including Hurrell Froude, but the majority of the "Puseyites," including Pusey himself, contrived to remain within the fold of the Anglican Church, and their successors are to-day known as Anglo-Catholics.

One outcome of the Catholic revival was the Ecclesiastical Titles Bill of 1850. Lord John Russell, deferring to a sudden outburst of "No Popery" intolerance, brought this in to restrain Cardinal Wiseman from using English territorial names for the new bishoprics he was instituting. The Catholics ignored the new law from the first, but it was no longer possible to prosecute people for their religion in this country. The Act remained a dead letter until twenty years later somebody remembered that it had better be repealed.

1844-  
1850      § 60. The Christian Socialists.—It was a characteristic of the Tractarians (though not by any means of modern High Churchmen) that they were exclusively concerned with man's relationship with the unseen spiritual world. Britain was struggling to adapt herself to the new industrial way of life, and connected with this there had arisen many problems which would have to be solved before a healthy social existence would again be possible. But the men of the "Oxford Movement" were otherwise occupied. To them such things as these did not really matter. All that really mattered was man's relationship with God and his Church—considerations far too exalted to be mixed up with such grossly mundane matters.

1809-  
1875      A few years later, however, another party grew up in the Church with aspirations and enthusiasms of an entirely opposite tendency. The founder of this movement was F. D. Maurice, but its leading exponent was Charles Kingsley, Rector of Eversley in Hampshire, who won fame as a novelist and a poet as well as

being a preacher and a worker in the cause of social reform. The great object of "The Christian Socialists" was to make their religion the guiding principle of all human relationships. By taking on himself the likeness of man, Christ claimed supremacy over all aspects of human life, thought, and action. For the unchristian force of competition as the law of man's relationship to man, they sought to substitute the teaching of the Gospels. It was their object to show that politics could achieve no real results unless inspired by Christian ideals, and that Christianity could never fulfil its true vocation until it found expression in practical endeavour to make the world a better place to live in.

The Christian Socialists made no attempt to gain their ends by parliamentary action. Their method was to educate the working class to a sense of the desirability of these ideals, and to raise its self-respect through improved conditions of life. They published a series of pamphlets called *Politics for the People*, which, unlike the *Tracts for the Times*, were written in popular language on topics which vitally concerned the daily life of the working man. The most forcible of them were written by Kingsley under the pseudonym of "Parson Lot." Two of his novels, also, were written as propaganda for the movement: *Yeast*, which depicts the 1849 misery and degradation of rural life at this period, and *Alton Locke* which does the same for the industrial life of the towns. Later on, Kingsley devoted particular attention to such forms of practical Christianity as improved drains, better housing, and public health generally.

§ 61. **The Disruption of the Scottish Kirk.**—Contem- 1843  
poraneously with these movements in the English Church, a parallel revival of religious feeling was taking place in Scotland. The Established Presbyterian Church had drifted, during the eighteenth century, into a state of contented placidity similar to that which prevailed across the border. The appointment of ministers was often in the hands of easy-going, worldly-minded "lairds," and it was not surprising that ministers thus nominated should begin to think more of their pleasant manses and comfortable stipends than of the spiritual needs of their flocks. Gradually the rough edges got rubbed off the stark grimness of the Calvinistic theology and code of conduct which had been the basis of the Kirk's teaching in the early days of her history. But the preaching of the Wesleyan revivalists had aroused a fervid response in many Presbyterian hearts. In every parish there were

some, and in many there were a majority, who could not rest satisfied with pleasant latitudinarianism in the pulpit. The Scottish people have always had a taste for theological discussion, and there arose an insistent demand for purer and more rigidly orthodox doctrines. It was impossible, however, in the face of "lay presentation" for a congregation to get rid of a minister whose discourses were not to their taste. An earnest and determined minority in the Kirk demanded that a return should be made to the older arrangement by which the congregation selected its own minister; but this democratic principle was not upheld in the law courts.

1780-  
1847

Eventually the leaders of the movement amongst the ministers themselves took a decisive step. Headed by Dr. Chalmers, one of the finest characters and most famous preachers of the day, they gave up their comfortable positions under the Establishment, and founded the Free Church of Scotland. Within a year of this secession each of them had a new church built and was being maintained by the contributions of his faithful flock. Whatever may be our views on Church government, it cannot be denied that this was a fine act of renunciation; and it is yet another example of the loftier and more earnest spirit in religious matters which was so characteristic of the time.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. It has been said that the Evangelical Revival was the most important event in the eighteenth century. Do you agree with that?

2. Many people expected that the Great Reform Bill would lead to the Disestablishment of the Church of England. Why was this, and how was the danger averted?

3. How far were these religious movements the outcome of the Two Revolutions?

4. Write a debate between Dr. Chalmers, Cardinal Newman, the Rev. Charles Kingsley, and Lord Ashley on "Christian Ideals."

5. What traces of these movements do you see to-day?

## THE FIRST EPOCH OF REFORM

1832	PARLIAMENTARY REFORM		
1833	Church Discipline Act	FACTORY ACT	Abolition of Slavery
1834	POOR LAW AMENDMENT ACT First Grant for Education		
1835	MUNICIPAL REFORM ACT		
1836	Act removing Church monopoly of Marriages		Prisoners allowed Counsel
1837	Tithes commuted	First Limited Liability Act	Capital Offences Reduced
1838	Ecclesiastical Commissioners set up		
1839	State Control of Schools - Begins.		
1840	Penny Postage REPORT ON CANADA ADOPTED		
1841	Imprisonment for Debt Abolished		
1842	FIRST "FREE TRADE" BUDGET Mines Commission		

## CHAPTER XI

### The Three Great Reforms of the 'Thirties

"Rapid high-pressure wisdom is the only agent since the Great Reform Bill. . . . The whole earth is in Commission. The only doubt I feel on seeing a Whig I have never met before is not whether he is a commissioner or no, but what the department of life may be into which he has been appointed to inquire."—SYDNEY SMITH.

AFTER forty years of Tory quiescence the decade following the Great Reform Bill was filled with multifarious attempts to bring the laws of England into relationship with the new conditions of life which had arisen in the meantime. Commissions were appointed to inquire into every conceivable subject, and legislation went on with feverish activity. Some idea of the general scope and variety of these enactments may be gathered from the accompanying diagram. Our immediate object is to give a more detailed account of three of the most important of them.

1835      § 62. The Major Reforms : (a) The Municipal Reform Act.  
—The British people having become town-dwellers during the past half-century, municipal organisation had assumed a new importance. A reform of the existing conditions was clearly called for. The older cities had ancient charters, now quite out of date, which usually had the effect of putting the welfare of the place into the hands of "close corporations." These bodies elected their own nominees to such vacancies as occurred from time to time, so that membership was restricted to a narrow circle of privileged families. They were responsible to no outside authority, nor were they in any way representative of public opinion ; much of the revenue from the city property was often expended in eating and drinking and in providing sinecures for their supporters. On the other hand, the mushroom towns which had recently grown up in the North and Midlands were even worse off, for they were usually under the control of some Lord of the

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Manor and the local magistrates, who of course had no adequate machinery for dealing with this enormously increased population. The result was that almost unrestricted play was given to *laissez-faire*. Insanitary rookeries were run up as dwellings, no provision was made for drainage or for water-supply, or for cleansing the streets or for an efficient police. Dirt and darkness, both moral and physical, were everywhere undermining the health and happiness of the new generation.

Under the old parliamentary system there was little hope of all this being put right, for a reform of the corporations would have been interference with prescriptive rights sanctioned by long existence, such as Parliament itself was based on; but one of the first steps taken by the Government after 1832 was the appointment of a Royal Commission to inquire into the matter. The result was the Municipal Reform Act of 1835, which provided for Town Councils elected by the ratepayers. The powers of these new corporations were limited, but could be readily extended by means of private Acts of Parliament. Thus there was no cast-iron uniformity about the reformed municipal system: each town could develop according to its own needs and tastes and circumstances.

No Act of Parliament has had a more far-reaching effect on the life of the people than this. Citizens began to take a pride in the amenities and the good management of their city. Development has gone on from that day to this, and we see to-day in most of our towns a corporate life which regulates building, paves, cleans, and lights the streets, makes arrangements for the supply of gas, water, and electricity, and provides education, baths, trams, and police. All this costs a great deal of money and involves the collection of heavy rates; but it is a notable example of the development of the communal life which is so characteristic of our modern social system. Within thirty-five years of the passing of the Act, municipal activities had become so extended that a separate Government Office (the Local Government Board) 1871 had to be called into existence to supervise and control them.

§ 63. "The Cry of the Children."—A very obvious example of new conditions calling for fresh legislation was the employment of children in factories. The *laissez-faire* assumption that workmen ought to be left to make their own bargains with employers was clearly not justified when the "workmen" were children of six years old.

The situation arose through the fact that many tasks in the mills could be performed by children quite as efficiently as by adults—feeding machinery, for instance, and picking up the cotton waste off the floors. In the early days of the new industrial system, when the machines were driven by water-power, factories were often built in remote valleys in Lancashire and Yorkshire, far from the haunts of men. Labour had to be brought to them somehow or other, and the simplest way was to obtain pauper children from the workhouse authorities, who were very ready to be rid of the expense and responsibility of bringing them up. The children were often collected by agents, transported hundreds of miles, and delivered to the millowners at a fixed price per head. There was a fiction that they were apprenticed to the industry, but the plain truth is that they were slaves. They were at the mercy of the masters and their overseers, who were driven by the remorseless power of competition to get the last ounce of work out of them. Later on, when steam-power began to be used, the mills had to be built near to the coal which fed the engines, and the factory towns grew up. The “apprentice” system was no longer required, for the children of factory-hands and pitmen could be used; but the general condition of the little workers remained much the same.

It was a great calamity for the nation that for half a century and more millions of its children were forced to work at soul-destroying occupations, in a stifling atmosphere, for twelve, fourteen, sixteen hours a day, with no education, no games, no fresh air, and no happiness. We can see the results of that epoch even to-day, when conditions are so much more favourable for the working class; the average weight of a factory lad is about two stones lighter than that of a public school boy of the same age, and more than half the young men from industrial districts who present themselves for enlistment fail to reach the Army’s very moderate standard of physique. But, injurious to the race as was the enslavement of children, that of women had even worse effects; for the fact that mothers were driven by economic necessity to work long hours in factories caused several generations to grow up without that home life which is so essential to the development of the best features of modern civilisation.

§ 64. “The Good Lord Shaftesbury.”—Several attempts had been made from time to time to frame legislation to remedy these evils, but the employers had raised the cry that their industries

would be ruined, and had induced Parliament to whittle the Acts away until they were almost useless. For one thing, it was left to the local magistrates to carry them out, and these magistrates were usually either millowners themselves, or members of the millowning class. But the growing impulse of humanitarianism was strengthening public opinion on the subject, and soon after the passing of the Reform Bill, it was taken up by Lord Ashley, 1801-1876 the heir to the Earl of Shaftesbury. He was a Tory landowner of the pure patrician caste, and an Evangelical Churchman of the strictest type. He had no sympathy whatever with political democracy, but he was a genuine philanthropist; he fought the battle of the underman unweariedly year after year, he visited the slums of great cities to see for himself the conditions of life there, and he carried on a pertinacious struggle with the apathy and hostility of political friends and opponents, always upheld by his feeling that he was the special instrument of Providence. It is his name that we associate most closely with the series of measures which were passed during the next thirty years to ameliorate the conditions of labour, not only for factory hands, but for miners and even chimney-sweeps.

He first of all got the Whig Government to appoint a Commission to inquire into existing conditions in the factories, and the evidence set forth in its report was so striking that public opinion was stirred to its depths; it could no longer be doubtful that drastic legislation was required to deal with the evil. It appeared that little girls and boys of seven or eight years of age were working in an atmosphere of 80 degrees from 6 o'clock in the morning until 8.30 at night, with half an hour for dinner (during which they sometimes had to clean and oil the machinery). These were the normal hours: when a busy spell was on, the work often continued from three or half-past in the morning till ten or half-past at night. It was often necessary to beat and otherwise torture the children to keep them awake and at work during the latter part of the day. They often fell into the machinery when they dropped off to sleep; and in some mills there were few of the hands who were not maimed by some such "accident." Not infrequently the children were too tired to go home or to eat, and they would hide themselves to sleep in some nook in the mill.

§ 65. The Major Reforms: (b) The Factory Act.—A great 1833 many years of hard work and vigorous agitation were necessary



before the conditions of labour became such that the workers could live healthy and happy lives ; but the Factory Act was a big step in that direction. It forbade the employment of children under 9 altogether ; the hours of children under 13 were to be restricted to 8 a day ; and women and " young persons " under 18 could not be employed for more than  $13\frac{1}{2}$ . The most important feature of the Act, however, was that inspectors were to be appointed by the Home Office to go about the country and see that the new regulations were duly carried out. This was a strikingly new departure, for it marked the beginning of bureaucratic administration which since that day has tended more and more to diminish the authority of local magistrates, which was so all-embracing in the " good old days."

In 1842 another Royal Commission was appointed (again at the instance of Lord Ashley) to consider the conditions of employment in mines. The Blue Book in which their Report was published produced an even more immediate and overwhelming effect on the public mind and conscience than that of 1833. One reason for this is perhaps that it was illustrated by drawings done on the spot depicting women and children engaged in dragging trolleys of coal on their hands and knees along narrow alleys only thirty inches high, and similar scenes of life in the pits. It was proved that lives were sometimes lost owing to mere youngsters being put in charge of the winding apparatus, and that inquests were seldom held on such commonplace occurrences ; also that little boys of six or eight years of age were left for fourteen hours a day in the pitch dark, often with water over their ankles, opening and shutting the trap-doors which ventilated the mines ; and so on. The Mines Bill which followed put an end to the cruder horrors exposed, forbade altogether the employment of women below the surface, and provided for the appointment of another set of Government inspectors to see the regulations carried out.

§ 66. "The Speenhamland System."—A very important contributory cause of the disorganisation in the country during the generation which followed Waterloo was the system of granting relief to the poor which had grown up during the previous twenty years. The enclosure of agricultural land, and the dispossession of smallholders which was one of its indirect consequences, had even before the turn of the century produced so much distress and discontent that the ruling class seriously

feared an outbreak of "Jacobinism." There were thousands of French *émigrés* in the country who could testify to the dangers of a violent overthrow of the privileges of aristocratic landowners by a starving peasantry. Under the new conditions, owing to the economical working of big farms, and the rapid increase of the population, there were more people seeking employment as agricultural labourers than could possibly be absorbed; hence wages were falling far below the minimum necessary to support life, especially at a time when prices were rising almost daily in consequence of the French War. The suggestion was made in 1795 Parliament that the employers, who were gaining the benefit of the enhanced prices, should be forced to raise wages in proportion to the rising cost of living; but Pitt expressed the prevailing view that a Minimum Wage Bill would be a foolish and futile interference with the natural "Law of Supply and Demand," and the Members of Parliament—who mostly had very hazy ideas about Economics—were almost unanimous in rejecting the proposal.

This was all very well, but the magistrates and clergy in the rural districts were faced with facts to which politicians in London could shut their eyes. People were starving, and starving people often do desperate deeds. Some solution of the difficulty had to be found. A number of influential gentlemen of the neighbourhood met at Speenhamland, in Berkshire, in May, 1795, and devised a system of "doles" from the rates. They were to be on a sliding scale which varied according to the size of a man's family and the current price of corn. The idea quickly spread over the whole country until there were few districts which did not carry it out in some form or other.

The system was, of course, only a disguised form of Minimum Wage, and it had many disadvantages compared with that device, for it ignored the plain economic fact that every man's share of the wealth produced by his labour ought to be sufficient to keep him and his dependants in health, strength, and reasonable comfort. But this system allowed employers to pay much less than this, and grow rich on the difference. It relieved them of any lingering sense of responsibility for the welfare of their employees, while it relieved the employees of all incentive to find work for themselves or to be efficient and industrious workers. It resulted in workingmen losing all their self-respect, for they could not possibly avoid "going on the rates." If any man were known to have saved a

little money he got no work, since employers naturally preferred to take as labourers those whose wages were made up by parish relief. Moreover, it prevented men from getting work outside their own native place; for no parish would allow new-comers to settle within its boundaries, lest they should acquire a right to "relief" from its poor rate.

Thus both worker and master came to regard "parish money" as part of the normal way of providing for the subsistence of labour. The poor rate increased until it was often higher than the rent; and the small farmer, unable to bear the strain, was often compelled to sell his bit of land, become a labourer and accept relief himself. Moreover, the system encouraged people to marry young and have large families, in order to increase their share of the "dole." Many corrupt practices crept in, for there was little or no supervision of the spending of the rate. The overseer of the parish could do much to line his own pockets if he were a small tradesman, and could get cheap labour at the expense of the ratepayers if he were a farmer.

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§ 67. The Major Reforms : (c) The Poor Law Amendment Act.—One of the first acts of the reformed Parliament was to set on foot an inquiry into the cause and cure of this blot on the social system. A Royal Commission was set up under the chairmanship of Edwin Chadwick, a typical Benthamite Radical, clear-headed, logical, with an ingrained love of systematic administration. Like a surgeon, he knew how to be cruel to be kind.

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The "Poor Law Amendment Act" which resulted from the Report of this Commission was indeed a drastic remedy for the evil. It abolished outdoor relief altogether, except for the aged and infirm. If any person capable of work required aid from the rates, he was compelled to enter a workhouse, and workhouse life was deliberately made more unpleasant than the most unpleasant sort of life outside. Where parishes were too small to require separate workhouses of their own, they were joined with others in "Unions." Boards of Guardians were to be elected in each district, while Special Commissioners—of whom Chadwick himself was the first chairman—were to sit in London to organise the amalgamation of parishes and afterwards to guide and supervise the work of the guardians, and preserve that uniformity of administration which was so dear to the Benthamite heart.

The Act passed through both Houses of Parliament with very little opposition. The country gentlemen who still predominated

at Westminster were the very people whom the old system had most injured, and the Duke of Wellington said that the Act was "the best measure ever devised." It cannot be denied that its ultimate result was excellent. Within a very short time the poor rate was diminished by a half; the worker was driven by stern necessity to become independent, and the employer was forced to pay a living wage, lest he should be deprived of labour altogether. But it was many years before either class fully adapted itself to the altered conditions, and the interim was a period of terrible suffering for the poor. The disease had been a deadly one, sapping all the vigour and vitality of the body politic; but the operation required to cure it was painful in the extreme. Carlyle, who was living in the midst of the change, brings this out in his usual caustic vein: "England lay in sick discontent, writhing powerless on its sick-bed, dark, night-desperate, in wastefulness, want, improvidence and eating care, till, like Hyperion down the eastern slopes, the Poor Law Commissioners arose and said, 'Let there be workhouses, and the bread and water of affliction there!' It is a simple invention, as all truly great inventions are. If paupers are made miserable, paupers will needs decline in number. It is a secret known to all rat-catchers. . . . A still briefer method is that of arsenic, where otherwise permissible." But his final verdict on the Act is favourable: "Let us welcome the new Poor Law as the harsh beginning of much, the harsh ending of much. Most harsh and barren lies the new plougher's fallow field, the crude subsoil all turned up which never saw the sun, which as yet grows no herb, which has 'outdoor relief' for no one. Yet patience; innumerable weeds and corruptions lie safely turned down and extinguished under it; this same subsoil is the first step in all true husbandry; by heaven's blessing and the skyey influences fruits that are good and blessed will yet come of it."

The Act had been rushed through so quickly that little opportunity had been given for any opposition in the country to make itself heard; but no sooner had the Commissioners commenced their work than the most formidable opposition against the "Bastilles" arose. Cobbett rushed into pamphleteering warfare for the last time (he died in 1835), with the ingenious argument that the relief of the poor had been an obligation upon landlords ever since the dissolution of the monasteries. Other men who took a prominent part in the struggle were Richard

Oastler, who had been Ashley's predecessor as leader of the Factory Act agitation, James Rayner Stephens, a Wesleyan minister, and Feargus O'Connor, who was a discarded member of O'Connell's "tail." Although they did not succeed in getting the Act repealed, they made its execution so difficult in many places in the northern counties that it was almost a dead letter there. By degrees the agitation became merged in that for the "People's Charter," which we shall discuss in the next chapter.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What do you understand by Bureaucratic administration? Trace its beginnings in English history. What was the peculiarly English system which it replaced? Which system is the more genuinely democratic? What examples of it do you come into contact with to-day? What is there to be said for and against it?
2. How far were these three measures in agreement with (a) *laissez-faire*; (b) Benthamism?
- 3 Interpret Carlyle's parable of the subsoil.

## CHAPTER XII

### Self-Help for the Working Classes

"With all the elements of national prosperity, and with every capacity and disposition to take advantage of them, we find ourselves overwhelmed with suffering. . . . We come before your honourable House to tell you, in all humility, that this state of things must not be permitted to continue, that it cannot continue long without very seriously endangering the stability of the throne and the peace of the kingdom, and that by God's help and all lawful and constitutional appliances we are fully resolved that it shall speedily come to an end."—THE CHARTIST PETITION, 1838.

THE Industrial Revolution had increased the wealth of the community a hundred-fold, but the distribution of the increment was distorted and unjust. We have already, in our study of the period, caught glimpses of the privations, squalor, and degradation suffered by the working classes under the new economic system; we have realised how great were the difficulties in the way of understanding or remedying the evils at the time; and we have seen that even the passing of the Great Reform Bill, from which so much had been expected, did little or nothing to improve the immediate situation.

The time-honoured traditions and customs which had bound society together in the old days had been swept away by the devastating hurricane of unrestricted competition, and the humbler class could no longer look to their social superiors for guidance and protection. But Englishmen are not the stuff of which helots are made. We have now to consider the first attempts which they made to defend themselves against the economic forces which were threatening them with perpetual bondage. We must not be surprised if, in trying to struggle out of this uncharted Slough of Despond, they were sometimes misled into taking false steps.

§ 68. The Repeal of the Combination Acts.—Their in- 1824-  
stincts led them right in one matter, however. They quickly 1825

1799- realised that the only advantage they had over the masters was that of numbers, and that their only chance of improving their lot was to exploit this advantage by means of united action. But the masters realised this too, and had guarded against the danger by getting Pitt to put through the "Combina-  
 1800 tion Acts," which prohibited any agreement amongst workmen as  
 § 18 to the wages and conditions of labour they would accept. Associations of employers were prohibited too, but this was so completely a dead letter that very few of the masters even knew of its existence. For one thing, it was impossible for bodies of workmen to meet in secret, whereas half a dozen employers could come to a private understanding without any difficulty; for another, all cases under the Acts had to be brought before the magistrates, who were all of the employer class.

For a quarter of a century working men could only join together in trade societies by stealth; but early in the reign of George IV, just when the tide of the Old Toryism was beginning to turn, they found a leader whose talents were peculiarly suited to conducting political manoeuvres. Francis Place was a breeches-maker. For years his shop in the Strand had been the unofficial headquarters of Radicalism in London. He now induced Joseph Hume, one of the very few Radical Members of Parliament, to obtain a Royal Commission to inquire into various questions connected with industry, of which the right of combination was only one. It was contrived that the Commission should include as large a proportion as possible of men well-disposed to democratic ideas. The next step was to procure witnesses from the industrial districts who could testify to the hardships imposed upon workmen by these laws. Place entertained these witnesses at his house, and rehearsed them in their evidence. The members of the Commission were so impressed that they drew up a Bill repealing the Combination Acts altogether. By astute management this Bill was smuggled through Parliament as one of a little group of liberal measures (such as those which withdrew the restrictions on emigration and on the exportation of machinery), and it became law in June, 1824.

It had been hoped that working men would cease from agitation as soon as they felt that it was not the laws of the land but those of economics that were the cause of low wages. This assumption of calm wisdom and economic enlightenment in uneducated labourers was not justified, however. The immediate

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result of the repeal was an outbreak of disputes and strikes all over the country. This drew the attention of the Government to what had been done behind their backs, as it were; they were much perturbed, and forthwith appointed another Commission to advise upon the position. This Commission was of a very different character from the former one, and for the moment all seemed lost to the Radicals. But the indefatigable Place was a bad man to beat. He once again procured such a convincing band of witnesses that even this semi-hostile Commission could not deny that the workers had a very strong case.

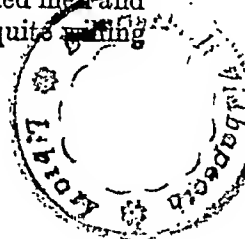
The Act of 1825, therefore, did not altogether undo that of the previous year. Combinations were no longer to be in themselves unlawful, as they had been before 1824, and collective bargaining with employers was henceforth permitted; but intimidation, or even the peaceful persuasion of fellow-workmen to any sort of direct action, was still a punishable offence. The laws as to trade unions remained in this stage for the next half-century—a very much more enlightened stage, we may notice incidentally, than anything that existed on the Continent for many years to come.

§ 69. *The Last Labourers' Revolt.*—The art of working together for a common purpose is not easily learnt, and agricultural labourers, living scattered over the countryside, have always found it almost impossible. This difficulty was very evident in 1830, when the labourers of the southern counties broke out in a blind and convulsive struggle for a living wage. Their existence had for many years been wretched beyond belief. Wages averaged about 7s. a week for a married man with a family, at a time when many of the necessities of life were far dearer than they are to-day. The miserable supplement that they received from the poor rate was sufficient to sap their self-respect, but not sufficient to keep them in health and strength. The last straw was the introduction of threshing-machines, which deprived them of the occasional opportunity to earn a trifle extra.

The disturbances, which began in Kent in October 1830, and gradually spread during the next month or two through Sussex, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, Wiltshire, and Berkshire, usually took the form of smashing these threshing-machines, and then going in a body to the farmers to demand a higher scale of pay—sometimes as much as 2s. or even 2s. 3d. a day for married men and 1s. 9d. a day for bachelors. The farmers were often quite willing

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to accede to these not extravagant demands, provided that their own rents and tithes were reduced to a reasonable level ; and so the next step was to put a similar sort of pressure upon the landlords. Lord Grey's Government were highly alarmed. There were no regular police in these rural districts ; special constables could not be enrolled, for the sympathies of all classes except the gentry were on the side of the rioters ; and the army had been too drastically cut down after Waterloo to be able to garrison half a dozen counties, even if the soldiers could have been relied on to obey their officers in such a cause. However, in most places an amicable settlement was made ; the farmers admitted the justice of the claims, and agreed to pay the higher scale, so that by the end of the year all was quiet again.

The magistrates now had a chance to arrest the former rioters at their leisure, and they made such good use of it that the gaols were soon overflowing. A special commission of judges was sent round with the express purpose of striking terror into the hearts of the peasantry. What followed reminds us of the stories of the Bloody Assize of Judge Jeffreys after Sedgemoor. In all the riots not one person was killed or even seriously injured, but the prisoners had rendered themselves liable to the penalty of death under a forgotten Act of Parliament which made their mere presence in a mob a capital offence. At Winchester Assize alone one hundred persons—some of them mere boys—were sentenced to death. This was in nearly all cases commuted to transportation to the penal settlements in Australia ; but as no provision was made to bring the convicts home at the expiration of their sentences, this really involved banishment for life. Wives, children, and aged parents all had to be left destitute. "Such a total prostration of the mental faculties by fear," wrote the *Times* correspondent, "and such a terrible exhibition of anguish and despair, I never before witnessed."

Having thus vindicated law and order at the expense of the "rebels" the Government now prosecuted Cobbett, who had supported them in his *Political Register*. But the law officers of the Crown found him a very different proposition from the cowed and illiterate yokels they had been brow-beating on circuit. His searching cross-examination of the Crown witnesses, followed by a scathing indictment of the Whigs and all their ways, made Lord Melbourne (who was Home Secretary at the time) realise that he had ' caught ' the rat. The jury disagreed,

the prisoner was discharged, and the Government were very glad to let it go at that.

§ 70. Robert Owen.—Social Reformers have two alternative 1771-1858  
methods open to them. They can seek their ends either by changes in the law of the land—that is to say by Parliamentary action, or by organisations outside Parliament altogether—that is to say by Direct Action. Even after the passing of the Great Reform Bill Parliament responded very sluggishly to public opinion, and thus the first phase of the struggle to relieve the people of this country from the evil effects upon their lives of the Industrial Revolution naturally took the Direct form. The central figure in this first phase was Robert Owen.

Owen was a Welshman of humble origin. Apprenticed at twelve years of age to the drapery trade, he quickly rose in those days of unlimited opportunity to the enterprising, to become a wealthy capitalist and employer of labour. But money-making was only a subordinate interest to him: the master-passion of his life was the improvement in wisdom and happiness of his fellow-men; and in putting these ideals into practical shape he spent the whole of his life, energy and fortune.

At New Lanark, in Scotland, he established a model factory 1800  
and a model village. His employees had reasonable hours of work, pleasant homes, good and cheap food from communal stores, and every incentive to self-respect and self-improvement. Owen gave particular attention to the education of the children of his little colony, and was one of the first to realise how much non-vocational training could do to improve the productive power of the workers. The New Lanark Mills became famous. Visitors flocked from all over the world—amongst others the Czar Nicholas—to see the novel sight of contented and intelligent people working in a factory. Then, after twenty years, Owen was gradually overwhelmed by the difficulties which always beset such pioneers. His broadly tolerant views on religion alarmed one set of people; his encouragement of dancing as a recreation horrified another; his enthusiasm for education raised the old cry of the anti-Jacobin—it was “giving the poor dangerous ideas above their station in life.” After 1813 he gradually gave up his interest in the mills; but by this time he had gained both fame and fortune from them, and he now turned his attention to broader and more general work for social reform.

The rest of Owen's career was an unrelieved series of failures.

but there are some failures more valuable to progress than success. The triumph of New Lanark was the triumph of a benevolent despot. Beyond proving that industry could be profitably carried on without enslaving the workers it had contributed little to the permanent cure of social ills. His subsequent experiments in co-operation and common action all came to a bad end, but they were far more fruitful than the grandmotherly organisation of New Lanark.

1834 § 71. "The Grand National."—The next twenty years of Owen's life were spent mainly in public-spirited but abortive attempts to establish communal colonies in Scotland, in America, in Ireland, and in Hampshire. Then, with undiminished ardour and optimism he turned his attention to a movement to promote the solidarity of the working classes of Great Britain.

§ 49 When the Radicals found that the Reform Bill, so far from giving everybody everything, gave nobody below the middle class anything at all, they turned angrily aside from Parliamentary action, and began to look for salvation to the trade unions which the repeal of the Combination Acts had called into being. These unions were small sectional affairs, each confined to a particular locality. Several of them had tried to extort better terms from employers by going on strike, but they had always been worsted in these struggles. Robert Owen thought that if these little unions could present a united front to the whole employer class, they would be more successful. In a few months or even weeks the whole evil industrial system would collapse and be replaced by a new and happier world. With this in view he formed "The Grand National Consolidated Trades Union." It attempted to knit together all the sectional unions into one organisation, and if necessary it was to promote a national strike, which would paralyse the industrial life of the country and bring the capitalists to their knees. But this was making the trade union movement try to run before it could walk. A similar scheme has failed even in our own day, after a century of experience in the organisation of labour. The whole thing collapsed ignominiously within a month.

One striking incident signalled the failure of this first phase of trade unionism. An oath of fidelity had been a feature of some of those primitive unions, and this gave the Government a chance to intervene on the side of the employers. They caused six men of otherwise blameless character to be indicted on a charge of

administering an oath to agricultural labourers in the village of Tolpuddle, in Dorsetshire, the prosecution being based on an 1834 Act passed at the time of the naval mutinies. This Labourers' Union expressly forbade its members to commit acts of violence, or even to go on strike, but that made no difference. The prisoners were sentenced to transportation for seven years. The protest against this deed was so general and so prolonged that a few years later the Government were forced to pardon and repatriate the victims; but the incident, taken in conjunction with the punishment of the Labourers' Revolt, gives us some idea why O'Connell spoke of "the base, brutal, and bloody Whigs."

§ 72. "The People's Charter."—Then the Radicals reverted 1838-1842 once more to parliamentary action: an attempt to remove the shortcomings of the Great Reform Bill. Their immediate object was to arouse public opinion to such a pitch that Parliament would be unable to resist the demand for reform. The leaders of the movement formulated six demands: (1) Manhood suffrage; (2) Abolition of the Property Qualification for Members; (3) Equal Electoral Districts; (4) Vote by Ballot; (5) Payment of Members; (6) Annual Parliaments. The general effect of these proposals would be to put Parliament under the immediate control of the working classes. The agitation had the support of O'Connell, and it was he who first gave it the name by which it became famous. "This is your Charter," he said; "work for it, never be content till you have got it." Of the many able and devoted men who became prominent leaders in the movement perhaps the most characteristic were William Lovett and Feargus O'Connor. The former was a working cabinet-maker, a self-educated, high-minded constitutional agitator, to whom "Chartism" was a religion for which he was proud to suffer martyrdom. The latter, on the other hand, was an Irish aristocrat, a mob orator of powerful physique and volcanic energy. For some years he edited *The Northern Star*, a journal devoted to vigorous support of the movement, and often to scurrilous attacks on the Government which resisted it. In some respects O'Connor was the evil genius of Chartism, for he led it into violent methods which lost it the support of moderate men, and aroused the fears and hostility of the ruling classes.

The Government, however, had by this time profited by past experience of such agitations, and they acted with considerable prudence and good sense. The "physical force party" under

O'Connor gained the upper hand in the movement ; mass meetings were held with torchlight processions, wild threats were uttered, methods of throwing up barricades were discussed, pikes were manufactured. But the Government refused to be demoralised ; they did not suspend the Habeas Corpus Act, nor pass any special legislation. They put the suppression of actual disturbances in the hands of General Sir Charles Napier, an officer whose personal leanings were democratic, and who would therefore be likely to exercise forbearance and moderation. Many of the leading spirits were prosecuted under the ordinary law of the land and were sentenced to various terms of imprisonment, Lovett being one of the victims ; but there was little vindictive persecution, and on the whole there was a marked improvement in governmental methods. The only serious riot was an attempt to rescue one of the leaders who was imprisoned at Newport, South Wales, and this was a pitiable fiasco. The removal of the leading agitators seemed to take the heart out of the movement, and little more was heard of it for some years.

1839  
1844      § 73. "The Rochdale Pioneers."—As we have already seen, the current economic belief of the day was that prosperity could best be attained by each individual acting for himself, so long as he did not interfere with the prosperity of others. Robert Owen's doctrine, on the other hand, was that the true method was for each individual to seek the good of the community as a whole. The first is the leading principle of Victorian Liberalism ; while the latter is one of the foundations of Socialism.

One of the earliest forms of practical socialism in this country was Co-operation. The basis of this is the idea that trade should be carried on, not by individuals seeking to enrich themselves at the expense of the community, their prices only limited by the competition of other traders, but by the community itself, with prices fixed by the cost of production. Several attempts had been made to establish organisations with this object, some of them under the auspices of Owen himself, but they had all come to grief through mismanagement. Then in 1844 a group of Rochdale working men clubbed their pennies together until they could start a common store for supplying flour, oatmeal, and a few other commodities. The advantage of all such schemes is that the best quality of food can be supplied at the lowest price ; there is no motive for adulteration or trickery. The novel feature of the Rochdale plan was that the store was open to all, and that such

profits as the business made were divided (after the payment of five per cent. interest on the capital), not amongst the original shareholders, but amongst all the customers, in proportion to the amount of their purchases. Thus all these customers had an interest in extending the business, since an increased turnover would provide an increased profit for them to share.

The Toad Lane Store prospered exceedingly, and it was soon imitated in many other towns in the North and Midlands and in Scotland. Later on, all these stores joined together into one great organisation, so that the wholesale purchase of goods could be carried on to the best advantage; and a further development extended its activities from the distribution of goods to their manufacture. To-day the capital behind the movement is £40,000,000, and one-sixth of the population of Britain are co-operators. But its great importance in the early days with which we are now dealing was that it gave working men an enhanced self-respect, an opportunity and a motive for thrift, and a feeling of "having a stake in the country"; and it also provided a very valuable practical experience of the harmonious working together of many individuals for a common object.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Show how each of the six points of "The People's Charter" tended to the control of Parliament by the working class.
2. Explain how the various movements described in this chapter were examples of Direct or of Parliamentary action.
3. In what respects does Robert Owen deserve to be called the "Father of English Socialism"?

## CHAPTER XIII

### The Unfettering of Trade

"Nations seldom realise how prominent a place a sound system of finance holds among the vital elements of national well-being; how few political changes are worth purchasing by its sacrifice; or how widely and seriously human happiness is affected by . . . excessive and unjust taxation."—W. H. LECHE, *England in the Eighteenth Century*.

It is a long lane that has no turning, and we are at last approaching the end of this unhappy epoch in the history of the nation. The dislocation caused by the Industrial Revolution became less painful as men gradually learnt to adapt themselves to the new conditions of life. It was no sudden or miraculous change that took place about the middle of the century; but the tide ceased to ebb, and although its flow was at first so sluggish as to be almost imperceptible, and was often disturbed by cross-currents, it soon began to set definitely in the right direction.

The new era began with the freeing of British trade from the shackles which had hitherto hindered its development. This was the main reason for the growth of national prosperity—ultimately shared by all classes of the community—which followed. The central character in this story is Sir Robert Peel, and the circumstances bear a singular resemblance to those which accompanied a previous crisis in his career—the passing of the Catholic Relief Act.

**§ 74. Taxes for Revenue and Taxes for Protection.**—Taxation is a department of statecraft which has grown greatly in importance during the last few centuries. In the Middle Ages the king was expected to "live of his own"—that is to say, to defray the ordinary expenses of carrying on the government out of the revenue of his own estates. There was no standing army, no navy, no education, and only a very rudimentary civil

service. As the population increased, however, and the body politic developed in complexity, the State was called upon to perform more and more functions, and therefore to raise more and more from the nation in the way of taxes.

We have noticed in an earlier chapter the distinction between direct and indirect taxes, and have seen that the former are mostly paid by the wealthy, while the latter bear most heavily on the poor. We must now notice a very important distinction between two varieties of indirect taxation: the object with which it is imposed may be simply to raise revenue, or it may be primarily intended to "protect" some form of industry by hindering foreign competition. For centuries men accepted without question the idea of protection as a means of encouraging home industries: it seemed obvious that the main object of statesmanship should be to make it difficult for foreigners to find a market in this country for their goods. Then Adam Smith showed in his *Wealth of Nations* that this "Mercantile Theory" was based 1776 on several false ideas. For instance, coins must not be confused with wealth; they are merely convenient tokens for it, devised to facilitate small local transactions. Trade on a large scale, and particularly international trade, is merely an indirect form of bartering goods against each other. It therefore § 23 followed that to hinder foreign goods from coming into the country was also to hinder our own productions from going out of it.

One of the earliest converts to Smith's teachings was Pitt, 1789 and his Commercial Treaty with France was a first attempt to put them into practice. Then came the long war, and the urgent need to exploit every possible form of raising revenue. Pitt induced Parliament to accept the income tax in 1797, but most of the increased revenue came from indirect taxes. These were too often imposed haphazard, with little consideration for the ultimate effect they would produce on the national prosperity. When the country was mainly self-supplying, these effects were negligible, but after the Industrial Revolution had made it necessary to export manufactures and to import food the restrictions checked our trade and starved our people.

§ 75. Post-War Chaos.—But when the war was over, there 1815- was no relief—rather the reverse. The expenses of government 1841 were still high, and the removal of the income tax meant that § 21 more of the revenue had to be met from indirect taxation, while



1815 the "Corn Laws" were passed with a view to protecting agriculture. Much of the ensuing distress amongst the working class was caused by the stagnation of foreign trade which resulted from these "duties." In the next decade the "Enlightened  
 § 32 Tories" realised something of this, and Huskisson made tentative  
 1824- efforts to remove the duties from the raw materials of industry,  
 1826 and to encourage colonial trade. Then followed a period of confusion worse confounded. Many of the reforms of the 'thirties involved increased expenditure, for the buying up of slaves, the working of the new Poor Law, and so on. Moreover, although many of the Whig statesmen of the time were high-minded philanthropists and cultured gentlemen, none of them had the necessary training for putting the national finances in order, nor had they any taste for such a dull and prosaic task.

It was indeed difficult to see where any increase of revenue was to come from. Trade was bad, which diminished the return from the existing duties; while if they tried to make up for the deficiency by imposing more duties the only result was to cripple trade still further without increasing the revenue. To use the technical phrase, taxation had become *inelastic*. Year after year the national income could not be made to balance the expenditure: money had to be borrowed at increasingly high rates of interest, and bankruptcy seemed to be staring the country in the face. The prestige of the Whig party, which in 1830 had set out so triumphantly on its career of Reform, was completely shattered by 1840.

At last the Ministry of Lord Melbourne sought the usual remedy in cases of doubt and difficulty—a Royal Commission. The inquiry disclosed a ridiculous state of affairs. There were import duties on no less than five hundred different classes of goods, and these duties were regulated by eighty different Acts of Parliament. A whole army of revenue officers was required to assess and collect it. Of the five hundred articles taxed, ten produced four-fifths of the total revenue; while the duty on glass eyes for dolls, for instance, swelled the national revenue to the extent of 1s. 3½d. in an average year. The reason for the barrenness of so many of these taxes was that they made the price of the article so high that very few people could afford to buy it; thus the importation of it stopped—and so did the revenue.

While the Commission was still sitting, the Ministry ventured

to bring forward a scheme for substituting a moderate fixed duty on corn for the sliding scale which had been instituted in 1815; but this proposal so alarmed the land-owning Parliament that they were heavily defeated over the proposal. Lord Melbourne dissolved Parliament, and the General Election so reduced the numbers of the Whig Party that he resigned—much relieved to be rid of a task that had been growing more difficult and irksome every day.

§ 76. Peel and his Budgets.—Peel's hour had come. He had been nursing the Tory party back to health and strength ever since its collapse over Catholic Relief. It was now beginning to call itself "Conservative"; it was still pre-eminently the party of the landed gentry, but the crudities of its old creed had been softened. As we have seen, Peel had laid down the general lines of its new policy in his "Tamworth Manifesto." To maintain the Constitution was its main tenet, but moderate and cautious reform was not objected to. The circumstances of his accession to power in 1841, after the Whigs had been defeated in their attempt to modify the duty on corn, gave him a twofold mandate: to set the national finances in order, and to maintain the Corn Laws untouched. His Ministry included Lord Aberdeen, Lord Stanley, and young Mr. Gladstone, who all became Prime Ministers themselves later on; but it did *not* include another future Prime Minister who considered that he had strong claims to office—a fact which had considerable bearing on the future political career of most of the members of that House.

Peel forthwith set about his great task of restoring the financial position of the country, and the plan he adopted certainly did not lack boldness. In fact it was a paradox: he proposed to increase the revenue by decreasing taxation. He abolished a number of the existing duties, reckoning that this would have such an effect in reviving trade, promoting general prosperity, and augmenting the spending-power of the nation, that the duties left on would provide a greatly increased revenue. Of course, some little time would elapse before this responsive picking-up of trade could make its effect felt, and there would for a year or two be a temporary deficit arising from the removal of the old taxes. He proposed to overcome this difficulty by reimposing the income tax for a limited period at the rate of 6d in the £.

This scheme was put into operation gradually by the four Budgets of the years 1842–45, which may be said to have laid the

foundations of Britain's fiscal policy from that day to this. Hundreds of vexatious duties were removed. The cost of living went down; and an immediate revival of trade began, since manufacturers could export their goods, now that it was possible for foreign goods to be imported in exchange. But all-round prosperity of this sort is a plant of slow growth. Several years passed before the benefits of the policy filtered through to the working class, and it was not until about 1850 that its full effect began to be felt.

The chief reason for the delay, however, was that Peel did not see his way to remove the most obstructive and burdensome of all these duties—those on corn. It is always easier to remove duties imposed for revenue only than it is to remove those which have as their object the protection of some powerful "interest." Moreover, he would in any case have been restrained from touching the Corn Laws by all the prejudices of his social class and of his parliamentary party, as well as by the circumstances which had placed him in office.

§ 77. The Anti-Corn Law League.—Meanwhile a new phenomenon was taking shape outside Parliament, which not only had a great effect on this particular situation, but was destined to set a striking example to future generations of political agitators.

1838 A number of men, mostly well-to-do manufacturers and merchants, felt that the Corn Laws were the root-cause at once of bad trade and of high food prices. They were determined to get them abolished, and with this in view, they formed a League to educate public opinion on the subject, and so to bring pressure to bear on Parliament. Some were moved by a mere selfish desire to get foreign orders for their goods, others by the philanthropic object of providing food and employment for the suffering masses, many by a combination of the two motives. Their money flowed freely into the coffers of the League to defray the expenses of the agitation. Meetings were held all over the country, in rural districts as well as in towns—for the leaders of the movement always maintained that the laws had done the farmers no real good—lectures were given, leaflets and pamphlets by the million were distributed. Two circumstances greatly favoured the agitators. One was the institution of the Penny Post in 1840, which enabled them to reach the breakfast tables of the public in a way that would have been impossible a few years

before; and the other was the rapid extension of the railway system all through the 'thirties, which gave their lecturers immensely improved facilities for getting about the country. The movement was almost entirely confined to the middle class. The Chartists refused to support it in any way, for they felt that it was a rival movement, and they suspected that these prosperous capitalists intended once again to "cheat the working class," as they had over the Reform Bill agitation.

The two most famous members of the League were Cobden and Bright. Richard Cobden was a calico printer, who had started life in a very humble way and had prospered through a combination of fair dealing and business shrewdness. He was almost entirely self-educated, and had made a special study of economic questions and their practical application, at home and abroad. He was one of the first organisers of the League, and became one of its chief spokesmen. His style of speech-making was a frank, pleasant, straightforward appeal to the common sense of his audiences. John Bright was a Quaker cotton-spinner; he was above all things an orator—it was to the passion of righteous indignation against monopolists enriching themselves at the expense of the miseries of the poor that he chiefly appealed. Cobden's attitude towards the Corn Laws was that they were not *sensible*; Bright's that they were not *right*. The two men often appeared together on the platform of the League, where they made a very effective contrast in style and method.

In 1841 Cobden got into Parliament, where he kept the subject to the fore with his quiet and persistent persuasiveness year after year. Peel became convinced, partly by his own reflections and partly by the arguments brought forward by Cobden, that the Corn Laws would have to go, sooner or later; but he may well have dreaded the thought of abolishing them, for he was pledged up to the hilt to maintain them, and they were the Ark of the Covenant to the main body of his supporters. His was a slow, tenacious type of mind; he was always shy and reticent, not to say awkward and ungracious, in his intercourse with his colleagues, so that they remained altogether ignorant of this gradual change in his views. Meanwhile he turned the matter over in his mind, quietly waiting for a suitable opportunity—such as the general election which would be due in a year or two—to declare and explain this new conviction.

But an unforeseen catastrophe precipitated a crisis which upset

all his plans, and brought a sudden and unexpected success to the Anti-Corn Law League.

§ 78. *Rotten Potatoes.*—In the summer of 1845 the staple crops both of England and of Ireland were ruined. In England the corn was spoilt by the continuously cold and wet weather, while in Ireland the potatoes were practically wiped out by disease. The English peasantry had learnt to live with very little bread, so dear had it been for the last thirty years, and the bad harvest merely involved them in misery. But the failure of the potato crop in Ireland deprived the people of their only food: it sentenced them to death by starvation. Men, women, and children were eating grass like cattle and dying in the streets in the autumn of 1845. England had no food supplies to send, and no relief could come in from abroad because of the Corn Laws.

Something had to be done, and at once. Peel was deeply stirred by the tales of suffering that were reaching him by every mail; "Such agony of mind," said the old Duke of Wellington, "I never beheld." Relief funds were generously subscribed to, and special shipments of maize brought in, but these were only palliatives. Then there came back into Peel's mind the alluring pictures which Cobden had drawn of the foreign granaries bursting with the precious grain that would feed the starving people, and at the same time set our factories working to make goods to exchange for it. The Cabinet was hastily summoned, and the Prime Minister bluntly told his colleagues that he was converted to the necessity of immediately repealing the Corn Laws. Most of the Ministers, who had also come under the spell of the Free Trade orators, agreed readily enough, but several of the more aristocratic members could not so easily lay aside the traditions in which they had been born and bred. When, after a short adjournment, Peel found that agreement was impossible, he resigned.

Then the Queen sent for Lord John Russell, who had now become leader of the Whigs in succession to Lord Melbourne. Lord John had recently issued his famous "Edinburgh Letter" to his constituents of the City of London, adopting "total and immediate repeal" as the policy of the party; but many of the Whigs were territorial magnates just as closely wedded to protection as the Tories themselves. Lord John quickly perceived that he would never be able to carry the repeal without splitting

his party from top to bottom. It seemed as if Peel would have a better chance of getting the measure through owing to his hold over the Tory majority in the House of Lords, where his faithful old ally, the Duke, was supreme. The Whig chief, therefore, "handed the poisoned chalice back to Sir Robert," as Disraeli afterwards said. He intimated to the Queen that he could not undertake the task of forming a Ministry, and Peel was asked to return to office.

Sir Robert had now a clear course, and he probably had little idea that there was any poison in the chalice at all. The general public had been stirred by the League into a vigorous demand for Repeal, while in Parliament he could count on the support of the Irish members under O'Connell, and most of the Whigs, as well as those members of his own party who represented the manufacturing interest rather than the agricultural. Some of the worthy squires who sat behind him would doubtless grumble, but they could not do much more; for speech-making was not much in their line, and they had nobody to lead them.

§ 79. "Vivian Grey" opens his Oyster.—But this was where Peel made a grave miscalculation.

Benjamin Disraeli was a brilliantly clever young Jew who 1804- had adopted politics as a career. He had already won fame by 1881 writing several successful novels. The motto of the first of his heroes, Vivian Grey, was: "The world's mine oyster," and it might well have been the author's own. He was determined to open the oyster with his own wit and courage; and he succeeded in the end, in the face of natural handicaps that would have ruined the chance of any ordinary man. He had already found that his Jewish blood, his un-English appearance and manners, and the suspicion that he was a mere adventurer, had prevented his making the first step towards the position he coveted: Peel had refused to make him even a subordinate member of his § 76 Ministry in 1841. The Corn Law crisis gave him the longed-for opportunity to attract attention, and to exercise his extraordinary gifts for debate and oratorical attack at the expense of the man who had slighted him. His vigorous and dazzlingly clever onslaught on "the great betrayal" of Tory principles gave exquisite delight to the back-bench Tories; especially as Sir Robert, a keenly sensitive man despite his cold and haughty manner, visibly writhed under it. Under the nominal leadership of Lord George Bentinck, Disraeli succeeded in focussing the

opposition to Repeal into a formidable rebellion against the official chief of the party.

§ 42 Sir Robert carried his Bill all right with the aid of the Whigs and the Irish, but at a heavy price to himself and his party. The "Protectionist Tories" took a speedy revenge by opposing a Coercion Bill introduced by Peel to repress the disorders caused in Ireland by the famine. The Bill was defeated, and the Ministry resigned, on the very day that the Corn Bill became law. Once again had Peel rent his party in two. Most of the "Peelites" ultimately joined the Whigs, but Sir Robert himself was never in office again. Until his death in 1850 he sat on the Opposition side of the House; but he generally supported the Whig Government that came into power after his resignation, lest their defeat should lead to the Protectionists getting into office, and all his work be undone. By the time the Tories 1852 were next in office, however, the good effects of free trade in corn on the country's prosperity were so apparent that there was no possibility of its being reversed.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Classify present-day taxes in accordance with Section 74.
2. Was the Anti-Corn Law agitation an example of Parliamentary or Direct action?
3. Was the charge that Peel had betrayed his followers justified? Compare his conduct now and in the matter of Catholic Emancipation.
4. Why were the Irish so dependent on the potato crop?
5. Write extracts from imaginary speeches on the Corn Laws by Peel, Disraeli, Cobden, Bright, and O'Connell.

## CHAPTER XIV

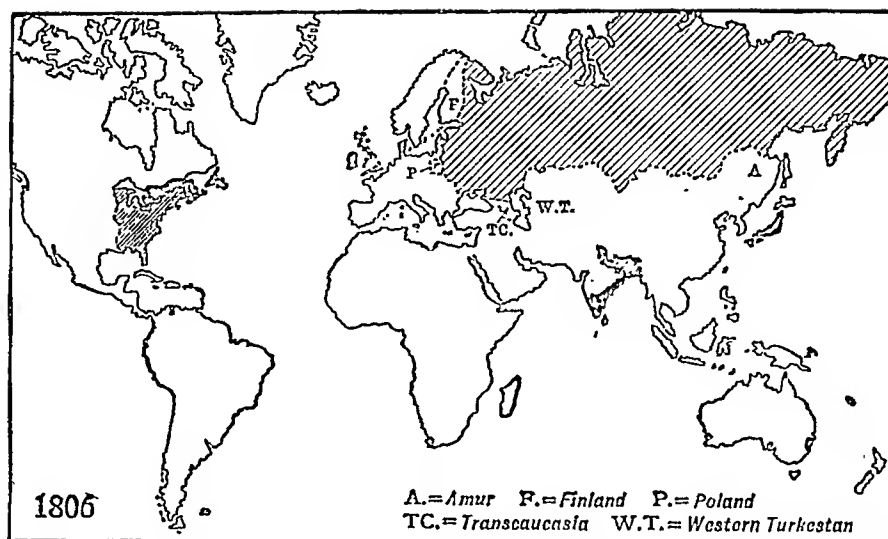
### Black and White

“Men whose boast it is that ye  
Come of fathers brave and free,  
If there breathe on earth a slave,  
Are ye truly free and brave?  
No! true freedom is to share  
All the chains our brothers wear,  
And with heart and hand to be  
Earnest to make others free.”

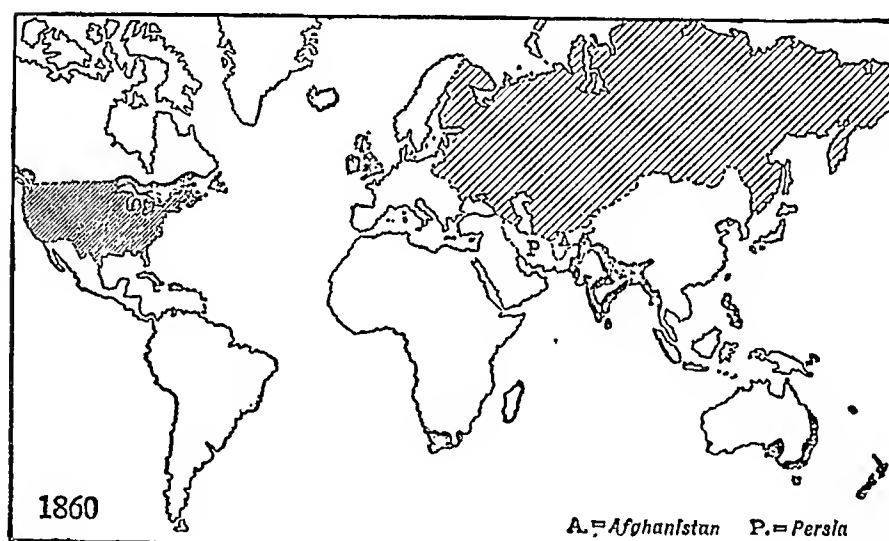
JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL.

WE have frequently noticed in our studies how dimly men realised during the early part of the nineteenth century the real nature of the sociological forces—such as the twin revolutions—which were shaping their destinies. To nothing is this remark more applicable than to the growth of the Second British Empire. Of all the aspects of our country's position at the close of the Napoleonic Wars, none was more vital, and none was more completely ignored, than the fact that Britain emerged from them with the foundations of four or five great colonies well and truly laid. On these foundations was built up the modern British Commonwealth of Nations, the development of which has been one of the most important phenomena of the century, not only for Britain herself, but for the world in general. It was long before the real significance of this fact was realised, however. Disraeli's famous remark that “these wretched colonies” were “a mill-stone round our necks” was doubtless made in a petulant mood, and it referred only to the Newfoundland group, but another twenty years were to elapse before he showed any sign of developing an imperial policy. And Lord Palmerston, of whom flamboyant patriotism was always a marked characteristic, is said to have exclaimed when searching in vain for a colleague





Emery Walker Ltd. 20



Emery Walker Ltd. 20

THE EXPANSION OF THE BRITISH AND RUSSIAN EMPIRES AND OF THE  
UNITED STATES: 1806-1860

willing and able to become Colonial Secretary, "I suppose I shall have to take the confounded job myself. Fetch me an atlas!"

The first real contact that the home government made with the new colonies was through the abolition of slavery. That this act was not merely justifiable but necessary to our self-respect there is no gainsaying, but its immediate result was a sharp conflict with the colonists and an unfortunate set-back to their prosperity.

**§ 80. The Old Empire and the New.**—The two previous centuries had been full of the rivalries among the states of Western Europe for colonial possessions; but the Spanish, Dutch, and French overseas empires had all faded away, and Britain herself had lost her most important colonies—those on the eastern seaboard of North America. Holland's subsiding vitality had loosened her hold over The Cape and Ceylon, and her temporary absorption in the Napoleonic Empire had given us an opportunity to seize them. France had been compelled to surrender her claims in Canada and India, and we had succeeded in frustrating all her subsequent attempts to regain them. The internal weakness of Spain had led to the loss of all her South American possessions, which finally gained their complete § 54 independence in 1824. Thus, after Waterloo and the peace settlement which followed it, Britain found herself not merely the chief colonising power, but practically the only one; and she at the same time was possessed of a monopoly of sea-power that would enable her to develop it undisturbed.

The next half-century saw the building up of two great land empires, Russia absorbing northern Asia, and the United States spreading over the North American continent to the Pacific coast; but the growth of Britain's oceanic empire went on undisturbed by rivalries. The peoples and governments of Europe were preoccupied with internal struggles for liberty and nationality, and with dynastic ambitions; and there was a general impression, derived from recent experiences, that colonies were not worth acquiring and were impossible to retain when acquired.

This view was held by the great majority of Englishmen, too. The fact that we found ourselves in possession of three subcontinents and innumerable islands and ports scattered all over the world was the result of accident rather than design. These places had their advantages. Our monopoly of Indian trade

seemed to be a prize worth keeping, for instance, even when it compelled the Government to take reluctant steps to control the government of parts of the country. Again, Australia provided us with conveniently remote spots to use as convict settlements as a complement to the savage criminal code, in the absence of any adequate prison system at home. Apart from these considerations, our overseas dominions did not seem to have any vital interest for the King or his Ministers, or the educated classes generally. The first time that any official notice was taken of the colonies the impulse came from a side wind, as it were—the evangelical religious revival.

§ 81. **William Wilberforce.** — A great part of the old Empire had consisted of tropical and sub-tropical lands in which the manual labour required to cultivate the soil could only be carried on by negroes. For centuries Britain had played a shamefully prominent part in this traffic in human beings. The loss of the American Colonies had cut us off from one great field for the exploitation of the primitive races, but there still remained the West Indian Islands, from which more actual wealth was derived than from all the other possessions combined. In South Africa, too, a great deal of the labour was performed by Hottentots whose condition was hardly to be distinguished from servitude.

One of the most striking effects of the deepening of religious earnestness following on the Wesleyan Revival was a protest against slavery. The great apostle of the movement was William Wilberforce. In his early days he had been rather a dissipated young man about town, but he experienced a sudden and dramatic conversion to evangelical religion, and thereafter his whole life was devoted to philanthropy. It is perhaps typical of the spirit of the ruling class in those days of the revolutionary wars that he had little sympathy for the sufferings of the "lower orders" at home. He had much influence over Pitt, whom he had known at Cambridge, and he generally used that influence on the side of repression. He was largely responsible for the passing of the Combination Acts, for instance. But the wrongs of our poor black brethren in the plantations were contrary to the teaching of Scripture, and were therefore not to be tolerated by Christian men. He induced Pitt to take the matter up, but nothing was actually done until 1806, when the "All the Talents" Coalition Ministry passed an Act abolishing the Slave Trade. Henceforward the raiding of African villages and the horrors of the

"middle passage" were things of the past; the stock of slaves in the tropical colonies would have to be maintained by the natural increase of the negroes themselves.

§ 82. **The Abolition of Slavery.**—This was an important 1833 stage towards the goal, but it was no more. Wilberforce's activities were now supplemented by a group of evangelical Whigs nicknamed "The Clapham Sect," of whom one of the most devoted workers for the cause was Zachary Macaulay, the father of the historian. Moreover, the movement received a powerful stimulus from the ministers of religion of various denominations who had gone out under the missionary schemes which had been set on foot since the beginning of the century, to work amongst the slave populations. Whenever these missionaries came back on visits to the home-country they brought harrowing tales of the wrongs suffered by their flocks on the plantations; and one of them, the Rev. John Smith, had died in a West Indian prison on a charge, subsequently proved to be false, of inciting the blacks to rebellion.

These revelations from pulpit and platform doubtless lost nothing in the telling, and they presented but one side of the case; but they had a great effect on the quickened religious conscience § 51 and the humanitarian spirit of the age. One of the first actions of the reformed Parliament was to vote the sum of £20,000,000 to buy up all the slaves on British territory and set them free, with the proviso that they were to work as "apprentices" for their old masters for seven years. It was a notable, and indeed a noble, expression of the enlightened spirit of the time that the British Parliament should have taken such a step merely for righteousness' sake, especially considering the severe financial depression of the time. Wilberforce lived just long enough to hear of the crowning of his life's work.

Unfortunately, the price that had to be paid for this clearing of the national conscience was not limited to the sum paid to the slave-owners. Far heavier items in the bill were the disputes and the bad feeling and the hindrances to prosperity that resulted.

§ 83. **The South African Dutch.**—One colony in which the abolition produced an immediate crisis was South Africa, where the relationship between whites and blacks had been a source of difficulty for some time.

The first settlers at the Cape had been the Dutch, who wanted it as a halfway house to their East Indian possessions, in the same

way as St. Helena was used by the British and Mauritius by the French. We know the national character of those seventeenth-century Dutchmen in Europe—their shrewdness, their thrift and industry, their skill in the arts of husbandry, their rock-like determination to maintain their ultra-Protestant form of religion; and we feel a certain pride in knowing that we spring from much the same stock. Then, when Louis XIV struck a staggering blow at his own country and religion by driving his Huguenot subjects into exile, many of these fine people fled to Holland, where the authorities showed their sympathy with them by making them grants of land at the Cape. There they were soon absorbed into the Dutch population, though clearly-marked traces of the Huguenot blood can be seen to this day in the splendid physique of the race, as well as in the frequency of French names amongst them.

These Boers, as they came to be called, had many of the virtues and vices of the Old Testament patriarchs, and they lived much the same sort of life. They spent their days in the open air, far from the madding crowd of civilisation, with their flocks and herds and wooden ploughs. They treated the natives like serfs, to be exploited when submissive and to be flogged when not.

When the revolutionary armies invaded Holland in 1792 the Stadholder fled to England, and authorised the British Government to seize the Dutch colonies so that they might not fall into the hands of the French. At the general peace in 1815 the Cape, together with Demarara and a part of Honduras, was sold to Great Britain for the sum of £6,000,000. The main object of the Lord Liverpool's Ministry in making this acquisition was to prevent any hostile Power taking possession of this important stage on the long route to India. For a long time the chief differences involved in this change of ownership were, firstly, the settlement of a few thousand Englishmen near Port Elizabeth (still the most British part of Cape Colony), and, secondly, the influx of missionaries.

§ 84. The Great Trek.—In 1828 the Government exasperated the Boers by ordering that English should be the only language used throughout South Africa in the Law Courts and in the schools; but this was nothing to their disgust at the abolition of slavery five years later. They would have resented any sort of interference with their domestic arrangements; but this was

to them the tyrannical act of an alien, unsympathetic and far-distant Government. Moreover, the sum allotted to them was less than half the estimated value of their "property," and even this wretched sum had to be collected on their behalf in London by rapacious middlemen. The one compensating advantage they derived from the British connection was the fact that they had the protection of a powerful State against the Kaffir and Zulu tribes who were ever pressing southwards and threatening them with destruction. Now even this favour was withdrawn.

These vigorous Bantu peoples were far more highly developed than the lowly Hottentots who had hitherto been the only native race in the Cape peninsula. It was evident that sooner or later there would be a fierce conflict between them and the white settlers. In 1834 they made a great raid, burning farms, slaughtering settlers, and driving off cattle. Fortunately the British Governor, Sir Benjamin D'Urban, was an able and determined man. He got together a little field force, drove the invaders back beyond the Fish River, promised to leave them undisturbed so long as they did the same by the whites, and annexed a strip of country as a "No-man's land" between them and the colony.

Lord Glenelg, however, the Whig Minister responsible for the colonies, was not satisfied. He represented the evangelical conscience which looked upon the British as trustees for the backward races all over the world. His ignorance of the conditions actually prevailing in South Africa was almost ludicrous. He refused to believe D'Urban's "uncharitable" statements as to the barbarities of the Zulus, and expressed his own conviction that they were "victims of systematic injustice, driven to extort by violence that redress which they could not otherwise obtain." The annexation was therefore cancelled, and the Governor recalled.

To the Boers this was the last straw. When they realised that they could not even depend on the British Government to protect them from their savage enemies, a considerable number of them determined to shake the dust of the colony from off their feet. They would go forth into the wilderness with wives and goods and cattle, and make new homes for themselves where they could enjoy their own institutions, and make their own arrangements for self-protection. Some seven or eight thousand set out in 1836 very loosely organised parties with their tented ox-wagons in the spring of 1836. Some of them settled down as soon as they

had crossed the Orange River, while others went farther afield, across the Vaal. There they drove out the fierce Matabele, and set up a very simple form of republican constitution. It is significant that one of the fundamental laws of their little State was to be that missionaries were on no account to be allowed to set foot therein.

1838--  
1854

§ 85. **Blowing Hot and Blowing Cold.**—This was far from being the end, however, either of the complications with the natives, or of vacillations on the part of the Government. In 1838 a party of Boers moved down into Natal, which had been almost depopulated by the ravages of the Zulus. They had a desperate struggle with the Zulu chief, Dingaan, but by hard fighting and almost equally hard pioneering they won a fine stretch of country for themselves at the back of the Drakensberg Mountains. But when they began to fight the Kaffirs on their south-west borders and drive them into Cape Colony, the British Government felt bound to intervene. It annexed Natal and took charge of the Kaffir War itself. The Boers retired to the Transvaal in disgust, leaving Natal as empty as before, until the British began to come and settle on the coast a few years later.

1841--  
1846

Then the cold fit came again on Downing Street. Under the Peel Government the Colonial Office decided on a new policy—the building up of a ring of native states under British protection and missionary guidance, to form a barrier between the colonies and the disturbing elements outside, whether Boer or Bantu. This scheme broke down almost at once, however; quarrels and fighting broke out in all directions. Another reversal of policy followed. Sir Harry Smith, who had been D'Urban's chief lieutenant, was sent out to clear up the mess. Not only did he annex the "protected states" but the Orange Free State as well. Its inability to defend itself from Kaffir raids was a source of danger to other white settlers as well as the Boers themselves, and most of the latter were well pleased at the annexation, now that Glenelg was removed.

1847

For a few years South Africa enjoyed peace and quiet, but then Whitehall was seized with yet another chill. Stricken with remorse at having interfered with the Boers, it once more decided to wash its hands of the whole business. In 1852 the Sand River Convention finally recognised the independence of the Transvaal, and two years later the Bloemfontein Convention did the same for the Orange Free State.

Thus the well-intentioned action of high-minded philanthropists brought about a cleavage of races in South Africa which subsequently led to much bloodshed, and long retarded the prosperous development of the country.

§ 86. **The Decline of the West Indies.**—But the part of 1833-  
the Empire in which the abolition of slavery caused the severest 1845  
set-back was the West Indies. These were a relic of the First Empire. At the beginning of the century they were the most valuable of our overseas possessions, for they produced almost the whole of the world's supply of one of the greatest needs of civilised nations—sugar. This fact, and their value as refitting stations, was the chief reason why they were the scene of so many naval engagements during the French wars.

The events of the first half of the nineteenth century, however, struck blow after blow at their prosperity. First came the abolition of the slave trade in 1806. Then, a few years later, Napoleon, finding himself cut off by the blockade from West Indian supplies, set to work to find a substitute for cane sugar. A process was discovered of making sugar from beet-root, and a new agricultural industry arose in Europe which robbed the islands of their monopoly for ever.

Then followed the severest blow of all—the abolition of slavery 1833  
itself. The West Indian planters made the strongest and most indignant protests against it. The movement was an example of a conflict between two principles each of which was perfectly sound in itself: the religious impulse to protect the backward races from exploitation by unscrupulous white men, and the idea that Britons overseas should rule themselves without undue interference by a Parliament in which they were unrepresented. In this case it was the former principle that conquered, and the course taken was the only one possible for us as a nation; but it cannot be denied that the effect on the West Indies was just as disastrous as the planters had predicted. We read of the picturesque gathering of the slaves on the Jamaican hills to see Aug. 1,  
the dawning of the day which was to make them all free, but the 1834  
sober truth is that few of them ever did a day's work afterwards. In that genial climate and on that fruitful soil very little labour sufficed to provide the negroes with the necessaries of life, and their natural indolence prevented them from doing more. The one factor still in favour of the islands was that Great Britain continued to exclude imports of sugar from any other source; but



when Peel and Gladstone withdrew even this advantage in their Free Trade Budgets of the next twenty years, the last hope of the West Indies seemed to be gone. The labour difficulty, however, has since been partly surmounted by the introduction of East Indian coolies; and the growing demand for sub-tropical fruits—bananas, oranges, and lemons—in Europe and America has done much to compensate for the lost monopoly of sugar producing.

There was one other incident in West Indian history which, anticipating the flight of years, we must deal with here, since it bears closely on the main subject of this chapter. In 1865 a rising of the negroes took place in Jamaica caused by some sort of economic troubles. It was put down with great promptitude by Governor Eyre, but there was a loud outcry in England against what seemed like unnecessary severity. A Special Commission was appointed, whose report brought Eyre's career as a colonial governor to a close; but many people warmly sympathised with him, and there was a bitter controversy in which such men as Carlyle and John Stuart Mill took opposite sides. The most significant point about the incident was that the white inhabitants of the island petitioned that they might be relieved of the burden of representative government: they did not want to be held responsible for it by the negroes, and still less did they want to admit the latter to a share of political power. The Home Government acquiesced, for they had learnt that parliaments are unsuitable to lands in which backward races predominate in numbers. Thus Jamaica became a Crown Colony in 1866, and shortly afterwards most of the other islands followed suit.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Trace the influence of the evangelical spirit on the early history of the Empire.
2. Why did the West Indies decline in importance during the century?
3. Write a life of Wilberforce.
4. Was slave labour more important to the West Indian planter or to the Boer farmer (*i.e.* What is the economic value of slave labour)?
5. Write a history of South Africa up to the Bloemfontein Convention, paying special attention to the work of D'Urban and Sir Harry Smith.

## CHAPTER XV

### The Radical Imperialists

“Perfectly aware of the value of our colonial possessions, and strongly impressed with the necessity of maintaining our connexion with them, I know not in what respect it can be desirable that we should interfere with their internal legislation. . . . The colonists may not always know what laws are best for them, or which of their countrymen are the best fitted for conducting their affairs; but, at least they have a greater interest in coming to a right judgment on these points, and will take greater pains to do so, than those whose welfare is very slightly affected by the good or bad legislation of these portions of the Empire.”—LORD DURHAM, *Report on Canada*.

THE main cause of the development of the British overseas dominions was that they filled a real need in the economic and social life of the time. The Industrial Revolution had the effect of increasing the population of Britain far beyond the numbers that could be sustained by the produce of her own agriculture, and it also stimulated a ravenous and ever-growing appetite for the raw materials of industry—especially wool and cotton. The old colonial system had come to a bad end in 1782; but fortunately the destinies of the new empire were in the hands of far wiser and more open-minded men than George III and his friends, though it must not be forgotten that the later generation had the example of their predecessors before them, to tell them what not to do. Even in the new era, however, it was only spasmodically that the Ministers of the Crown acted with vision and understanding; the real architects of Greater Britain were a handful of enthusiasts at home, and another handful of colonial governors abroad.

§ 87. Edward Gibbon Wakefield.—Wakefield was a Ben-1796  
thamite Radical, who in 1826 sought to further “the greatest 1862  
good of the greatest number” by abducting and marrying a  
young heiress. For this offence he was sentenced to three

years imprisonment. While he was in gaol he read several books about the colonies, with a view to making a fresh start in life on his release. But even as he read, this personal aim was overborne by a larger vision—that of emigration as a cure for the social ills of Britain. When he came out of prison he started a  
 1830 Colonisation Society, with the support of Lord Durham (the “Radical Jack” who later had a hand in the drafting of the Great Reform Bill) and a friend named Charles Buller. It was these men who first grasped the broad principles on which the new colonial empire was based—that the colonies should provide a home for the surplus population, and should produce by the labour of these immigrants both food and raw materials for consumption in the homeland, which would in turn supply manufactured goods of all kinds to the colonists.

Wakefield had not only the vision to see the possibilities of colonisation: he had also the practical capacity to grapple with the difficulties which had hitherto lain in the way of its being  
 1833 effectively carried out. He pointed out in his *Art of Colonisation* that it was a mistake for the Government to make the grant of lands in the new countries too cheap. If settlers had to pay a reasonable price for it, say 10s. or £1 an acre, this would ensure that no one would take up as a speculation great stretches of land which he did not intend seriously to work. And it would also provide funds with which to bring out other settlers; for it had always been difficult for the poorer classes—just the very people who were most in need of an opportunity to emigrate—to raise the considerable sum required to pay their passage out.

On the other hand, it was hardly to be expected that doctrinaire Radicals like Wakefield would willingly see these new lands ruled by official autocrats at the Colonial Office. They were determined that they should be as autonomous as possible from the first, and the home of the broadest democratic principles. It was interference by politicians who were ignorant of colonies and contemptuous of colonists that had brought about the loss of our first empire, and the Radical Imperialists were the first to realise that the only really effective and lasting tie between the dominions would be a feeling of pride in common traditions and institutions of civil liberty. This may seem a trite commonplace to-day, but it was a daringly bold and original conception then. It is quite possible that a thousand years hence our idea of a Commonwealth of Free Nations and our William Shakespeare

will be the two things with which the name of Britain will be most closely associated.

§ 88. "The Long White Cloud."—It was New Zealand that seemed to offer the finest field for the activities of Wakefield and his friends, but that country presented some very difficult problems of its own. Unlike America and Australia, New Zealand has a native race of great vigour, intelligence, and adaptability; and to save the Maoris from a debasing contact with European civilisation became an obsession with the missionaries who settled there in the 'twenties and 'thirties. Apart from them, the only white men on the islands were some sailors engaged in whaling, and a few ex-convicts who had escaped from the penal settlements in Australia. As late as 1817 it had been distinctly laid down in a State document that "New Zealand does not form a part of His Majesty's dominions." The missionaries were strongly supported by Lord Glenelg and § 84 Sir James Stephen, his Permanent Secretary at the Colonial Office. They were both staunch Evangelical Churchmen, and were highly in favour of this design that the islands should be maintained as a sort of Low Church Theocracy, presided over by English and Scottish ministers of religion.

When, therefore, Wakefield propounded his scheme for colonising the country, every possible obstacle was thrown in his way by the authorities in Whitehall. Nevertheless, in 1838 the Colonisation Society, despite official discouragement, founded a "New Zealand Company," and sent out a pioneer party under Wakefield's brother Charles. This party got into conflict with the missionaries almost immediately; and before long they were at loggerheads with the natives, too, over the peculiarities of the Maori system of land tenure, by which the land is possessed, not by individuals, but by the tribe as a whole. It was no longer possible for the Government to refrain from interference, and in 1840 they sent an officer to annex the islands. The Treaty of Waitangi was concluded with the Maoris, by which the chiefs recognised the sovereignty of the Crown, but were in return recognised as owners of the soil, which had henceforward to be purchased from them by intending settlers.

The Maoris were not ill-disposed towards the British, and they eagerly absorbed many of the ideas of European civilisation, but they seemed to have a national passion for argument and dispute, and they loved fighting for its own sake. Moreover, the

colonists could not always be restrained from trying to over-reach them in bargains about the land. Owing to these causes a series of rebellions broke out in which the natives fought with no little gallantry and skill, and it was with difficulty that they were defeated. One of the greatest of the makers of Greater Britain, Sir George Grey, was now Governor. He had done much to make another Wakefield colony successful, in Australia, but it was in New Zealand that his farsighted and generous policy had its widest scope. He bought up much of the land on behalf of the Government, and let it to settlers on terms that they could understand; he won the hearts of the Maoris by learning their language and studying their antiquities; he set a limit to the "dog in the manger" policy of the missionaries; and he encouraged the sending out by the Scottish Presbyterian Church of a party of emigrants of the highest type, to settle in the extreme south, where the country and climate much resembled that of their native land. Thus, in time one at least of Wakefield's dreams came true, and in 1853 an independent constitution was set up for a new Britain over the seas.

1812-  
1898

§ 89. "Australia Felix."—Meanwhile there was growing up a thousand miles away another group of settlements with a markedly different history and destiny.

Captain Cook had set up the British flag at Botany Bay in 1769, but it was not for some years that the new possession aroused any interest in the Government. Even then, it was only because the loss of the American colonies had deprived the country of an outlet for its criminal population, so that the gaols were filled to overflowing. In 1788 Captain Arthur Philip was sent to establish a convict settlement there at a place which he called Sydney, after the Lord Sydney who was Home Secretary at the time. Philip was a very able, resourceful, high-minded man, but convicts and soldiers are not the best material out of which to build up a successful colony, and for some years the little community suffered from all sorts of vicissitudes caused by famine, flood, vice, rum, and violent quarrels amongst the leading men. After the introduction of the merino sheep by Captain Macarthur in 1799, however, and the discovery of ideal pasture-ground for them on the other side of the Blue Mountains, the tide turned. The suppression of the Irish Rebellion and the repressive measures of the Government in the years following the Peace of 1815 improved the class of the "criminals" sent

1798

out, and the hard times at home began to drive an ever-increasing stream of free emigrants across the seas.

Some of Wakefield's ideas on colonisation were adopted in a half-hearted way in New South Wales, but the presence of ex-convicts retarded its development for a long time. In 1831 a South Australian Company was started to organise a new colony that should be free from these disabilities. A good start was made, but when the time came for putting Wakefield's plans for self-government into operation, the Colonial Office drew back alarmed, and made it an ordinary Crown colony like New South Wales. The principles of the Colonisation Society were never given a fair trial, and Sir George Grey, who commenced his career as an administrator as Governor of South Australia, had much difficulty in saving the colony from bankruptcy. Still, the population of Australia increased rapidly. In 1830 only 1,500 emigrants had landed on its shores, but by 1840 the number had increased forty-fold.

In 1827 a Legislative Council had been set up in New South Wales, and one of its first demands was for the transportation system to come to an end. The cause of the colonists was taken up in Parliament by Sir William Molesworth, a prominent Radical member. In 1837 he procured the appointment of a Special Commission to inquire into the matter, and after 1840 no more convicts were sent to the mainland of Australia. For the next ten years Tasmania was used for the purpose, but the Government set itself to think out some better method of dealing with its criminals, and the ultimate result was the establishment in 1853 of the system of penal servitude in convict prisons at home.

This stigma once removed, the colonists put forward a claim to responsible self-government, and Lord John Russell carried through Parliament a Bill recognising three independent Australian colonies (New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia), each with an elective council, and making provision for others to be formed in the future. Each of the councils was to draft a permanent constitution for itself, subject to the approval of the Privy Council, and they were given full power to frame their own trade regulations.

This was a striking fulfilment of Wakefield's ideal; but there was something more than this behind the readiness with which these generous terms were granted to the Australians. Recent

events in Canada had given ministers a new conception of the relationship between the colonies and the Government.

1836-  
1838      § 90. **The Trouble in Canada.**—Across the Atlantic this question had arisen in much the same form as in the days of George III, but was complicated by difficulties of race and speech such as had had no counterpart in the old colonies. So acute and menacing was the crisis that the most drastic action by a particularly daring administrator was required to allay it; but the ultimate settlement was an important event in the history of the world, since it established the principles on which the British Empire has been built.

The situation was at first almost exactly parallel to that of 1765. The colonies which had grown up in Canada had each a Governor and Council nominated by the home Government, together with Legislative Assemblies elected by the colonists themselves. The only hold the Assemblies had over the Governor and his nominees lay in their power of withholding the grants of money necessary for carrying on the administration; and, being naturally jealous of the officials appointed from outside, they made frequent use of this power. The result was perpetual squabbles, with now and again a complete deadlock. In Ontario the hostility to the ruling clique (nicknamed "The Family Compact") grew so acute that a strong feeling arose in favour of joining the United States. In Quebec the bad feeling was intensified by differences of race and speech, since the Executive was exclusively British, while the population and their Assembly were almost wholly French. It was hateful to the *habitans* to be governed by unsympathetic bureaucrats who were independent of their control and of alien blood and faith. Moreover, when the British population of the province began to increase, as a result of the growing impulse towards emigration, the native-born French population dreaded lest their old-world traditions should be obliterated by the newcomers. A further grievance, common to both provinces, was the reckless way in which the Government had made grants of the best land (such as that situated along the rivers, where the difficulties of transport were minimised) to members of the ruling class, and particularly to clergy of the English Church—a Church to which very few of the colonists belonged, since the *habitans* were all Catholics, and most of the Ontarians Scottish Presbyterians. And the most exasperating feature of this short-

sighted policy was that very little of this land was worked, or even cleared, by the grantees.

This seething discontent broke out into sporadic and ill-organised rebellion in 1836. In Ontario the lead was taken by a Scottish journalist named Mackenzie, in Quebec by a voluble French lawyer named Papineau. The Governors of the two provinces had no difficulty in dealing with the risings. In Ontario, indeed, Major Head treated the "rebels" with somewhat ostentatious contempt—he sent away his handful of regular troops and called out the local militia to deal with the situation.

§ 91. John Lambton, First Earl of Durham. — But the British Government was by this time too enlightened to rest content with a mere suppression of the symptoms of discontent. The ominous resemblance of these circumstances to those which preceded the War of Independence was not lost on Lord John Russell, who was in charge of colonial affairs under Lord Melbourne. The Ministry decided to send out a Special Commissioner, whose duties should be, firstly, to clear up the effects of the rebellion and to dispose of the prisoners who were crowding the gaols; secondly, to probe the real causes of the discontent; and, thirdly, to advise upon a policy which would prevent a recurrence of the troubles. When it was announced that the Special Commissioner was to be Lord Durham, and that he was taking out as members of his staff both Wakefield and Buller, every one in touch with politics must have anticipated that the result would not be lacking in boldness. 1792-1840

Durham was a clear-headed, high-minded, energetic, determined, rather vain man—just the type that has done so much to build up the Empire. He enjoyed to the full his position of dictator, and was not afraid to act on his own responsibility; indeed, he was bound so to act in those days when it would have taken six weeks to get the views of the Colonial Office on any particular point of policy. He forthwith held a gaol-delivery of rebels, and some of his proceedings certainly seem to have been a trifle high-handed. He issued a series of ordinances, of which the first threatened with death any of the fugitive ex-rebels should they return to Canada, while the second pardoned all those who were in prison, with the exception of nine, who were banished to Bermuda. This was undoubtedly a contravention of one of the fundamental rights of British subjects, for the rebels had not been tried in any court of law, and over Bermuda Lord



Durham had no jurisdiction whatever. His first task accomplished, he set about investigating the general political situation and getting into touch with public opinion; and while thus engaged he journeyed about the colonies in semi-regal state.

§ 55 But his serene self-confidence soon had a severe shock. His ordinances gave a great opportunity to the Opposition at home, and particularly to Lord Brougham, who had never forgiven the patrician Whigs for leaving him out of their reconstructed Cabinet after Peel's "Hundred Days." He now attacked the Government with tremendous vigour in the sacred name of "Liberty." Under pressure of these onslaughts, the Ministry—by this time very insecure in their position in the House—gave way. They disavowed many of Durham's actions and cancelled his ordinances. They also decided to recall him; but he did not wait for this indignity to be inflicted upon him. Bitterly mortified, he threw up his post and came home. The following year he died—partly no doubt as a result of his disappointment—at the early age of forty.

§ 92. The "Report on Canada."—It was said after his death that he had "made an empire and marred a career." His failure was more apparent than real. He had already, before his resignation, sent home a Report advising the Government as to the best means of gaining and retaining the loyalty of the colonists. In drawing this document up he had the help of both Buller and Wakefield, and parts of it are almost a manifesto of the creed of the Radical Imperialists. After suggesting remedies for immediate local difficulties, such as land tenure, he proposes that the provinces should join in a federal government for some purposes, and remain independent for others, after the fashion of the United States. He then goes on to declare that the only way to keep the colonies permanently loyal is to let them govern themselves with a minimum of interference from the Home Government. Governors should be sent out to represent the Crown, but the executive officers of each province should be such as would command the support of the Assembly, as in the British Constitution itself. Lastly, Government posts should no longer be monopolised by persons imported from England; they should all be thrown open to native-born Canadians who would be in touch with local needs and traditions.

This Report was read, marked, and inwardly digested by the Ministry which had repudiated its author's actions. Many of

its suggestions as to practical details were carried into effect during the Governorship of Lord Elgin, who was Durham's 1847-son-in-law. But what was of far greater importance was the 1854 fact that the spirit which underlay it inspired more and more the policy of the Government, until it became the very basis on which the Empire rests.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Contrast the early history of Australia with that of New Zealand.
2. Why was the Home Government so ready to make these colonies autonomous?
3. Why were there no slaves to be emancipated in any of the colonies mentioned in the chapter?
4. Write a draft of Lord Durham's Report, incorporating the passage at the head of this chapter.

## CHAPTER XVI

### The New Spirit in India

"Let us not resemble the Romans merely in our national privileges and personal security. The Romans were great conquerors, but where they conquered they governed wisely. The nations they conquered were impressed so indelibly with the intellectual character of their masters that, after fourteen centuries of decadence, the traces of their civilisation are still discernible. Why should we not act a similar part in India?"—JOHN BRIGHT.

It is sometimes said that "Trade follows the Flag," but in India, at any rate, it was the Flag that followed Trade. For a century and a half the sole interest of the British in India was that of merchants trading with a foreign country in the domestic affairs of which they had no concern. This period came to an end about 1750, when circumstances compelled the merchant company to take a hand in ruling the districts surrounding their trading centres. Thirty years later the British Government found itself obliged to exercise some control over the actions of the Company, and to lend it some military power; but even then the primary object was still commercial—political and military interference was designed merely to preserve the mercantile interests of British subjects. It was not until the nineteenth century that the idea of "Empire" began to develop, and only in 1833 did we first openly admit that our primary concern and duty in India was not to make money, but to govern; that our aim should be to promote the welfare of its inhabitants rather than the wealth of a handful of English and Scottish shareholders.

The gradual acceptance of this idea, and the establishment of a "Pax Britannica" throughout the length and breadth of India, which was necessary to its fulfilment, are the main features of Indian history during the period we are at present studying.

§ 93. The Beginning of British Dominion.—The East

India Company had been granted a Charter by Queen Elizabeth giving it a monopoly of Indian trade ; and it later on obtained a similar concession from the great Mogul, the heir of the last of the Mohammedan invaders. It had no thought of acquiring territory, nor any desire for such a thing : what it wanted was profits. But towards the middle of the eighteenth century it was no longer able thus to hold aloof from native concerns. The Mogul Empire had fallen to pieces, and its satrapies were a prey to military adventurers, Hindu and Mohammedan. A rival to the E.I.C. had arisen, a French company, the very able Governor of which was quick to see the advantage that might be taken of the disturbed state of the country, in the struggle with his British competitors. The object of Dupleix was to get native potentates into his power, so as to extract trading concessions from them ; it was his fate to evolve the methods by which his British rivals ultimately gained possession of India.

The first of his inventions was the "Sepoy." He found that there were some races of Indians who, when trained by European officers in European methods of warfare, could become almost equal to European troops, and therefore vastly superior to any native warriors with none but Oriental weapons at their disposal. His second idea grew out of the first : it was to give the irresistible support of the troops thus organised to the weaker of two rival claimants to some native throne, whereafter the prince who owed his elevation to Dupleix' intervention was a mere puppet in the Frenchman's hands. The East India Company had to adopt these methods itself, if it was not to be ousted altogether ; and under the leadership of Clive it carried them out with such success that before long the French company had been decisively defeated at its own game.

The position of a company of merchants having its own private army was a singular phenomenon, and it soon led to even stranger and more far-reaching developments. The potentates who were maintained on their thrones by the Company's troops had, of course, to pay for the luxury ; and it suited the Company very well to have its commercial centres protected from its enemies, whether Indian or French, by an army maintained at somebody else's expense. But the native princes often governed their dominions so inefficiently that the revenue required for the purpose was not forthcoming. When this happened, there were two alternatives open to the Company : it could take charge itself,

so as to make the country solvent by efficient administration, or it could get ceded to it the sovereign rights of some part of the prince's dominions from the revenue of which it could defray the cost of defending the whole.

The Company's responsibilities thus grew greater and greater, but the Directors at home were always very reluctant to see these steps being taken. War and administration are expensive luxuries; what the shareholders wanted was not glory but dividends. Again and again the Court of Directors in London instructed their representatives to abstain from "adventures." Then came the War of American Independence which put the very existence of British interests into such danger—for the French made a determined effort to regain their lost ground in India—that a free hand had to be given to Warren Hastings, who was the Company's governor at the time. The ultimate result was a considerable increase in the Company's territory, but Hastings met with great opposition from the members of his Council (who were all appointed by the Directors), and as soon as the danger was over, he was forced to resign, so that a return could be made to the non-intervention policy.

§ 94. *The Government takes a Hand.*—The events of this war brought home to the King's Government what a singular situation had arisen in India. It was obviously impossible to allow a mere association of traders, however wealthy and influential, to administer such large areas, to handle such rich revenues, and to maintain its own fighting forces under the British flag, entirely at its own will and pleasure. Pitt's India Bill left the details of government to the Company's own officials, for the Court of Directors were nearly all Anglo-Indians who understood local conditions far better than home-bred politicians could; but a Board of Control of these latter was established to keep an eye on the general policy of the Company, and particularly to see that its higher officials were men of whose character and attainments the Government could approve.

It was due to this provision that when the next crisis arose, during the Revolutionary Wars, Pitt was able to procure the appointment as Governor and Commander-in-Chief of a man of first-rate ability. But Wellesley suffered the same fate as Warren Hastings. So long as danger threatened, the Government and the Company supported him, and within a very short time after his arrival he had overthrown the French influence

amongst the native princes decisively and for ever ; but as soon as he sought to deal with a further danger—the hostile power of the Mahrattas—by a policy of conquest and annexation, his aggressive action frightened both Ministers and Directors, and he was recalled.

These Mahrattas were a fierce and primitive warrior-people. They held military sway over a broad belt across the middle of India, under four confederated princes—the Peishwa, Bhonsla, Scindiah, and Holkar, and their further development in the direction of becoming the paramount power in India was now checked by their coming into contact with the British. A struggle for supremacy was inevitable. The Mahrattas had a considerable dash of the Tartar in their blood, and like their cousins in Northern Asia their military virtues enabled them to conquer lands they were quite unable to govern. We may therefore claim that it was better for the ultimate welfare of India that the British type of civilisation should survive in the struggle.

Wellesley had clearly seen all this, but he had only succeeded in carrying out half his policy—with the aid of the military talents of his young brother Arthur—when it was reversed. He had scotched the danger, but he was not permitted to kill it. The authorities at home determined to withdraw from the conflict, and to leave the Mahratta princes alone.

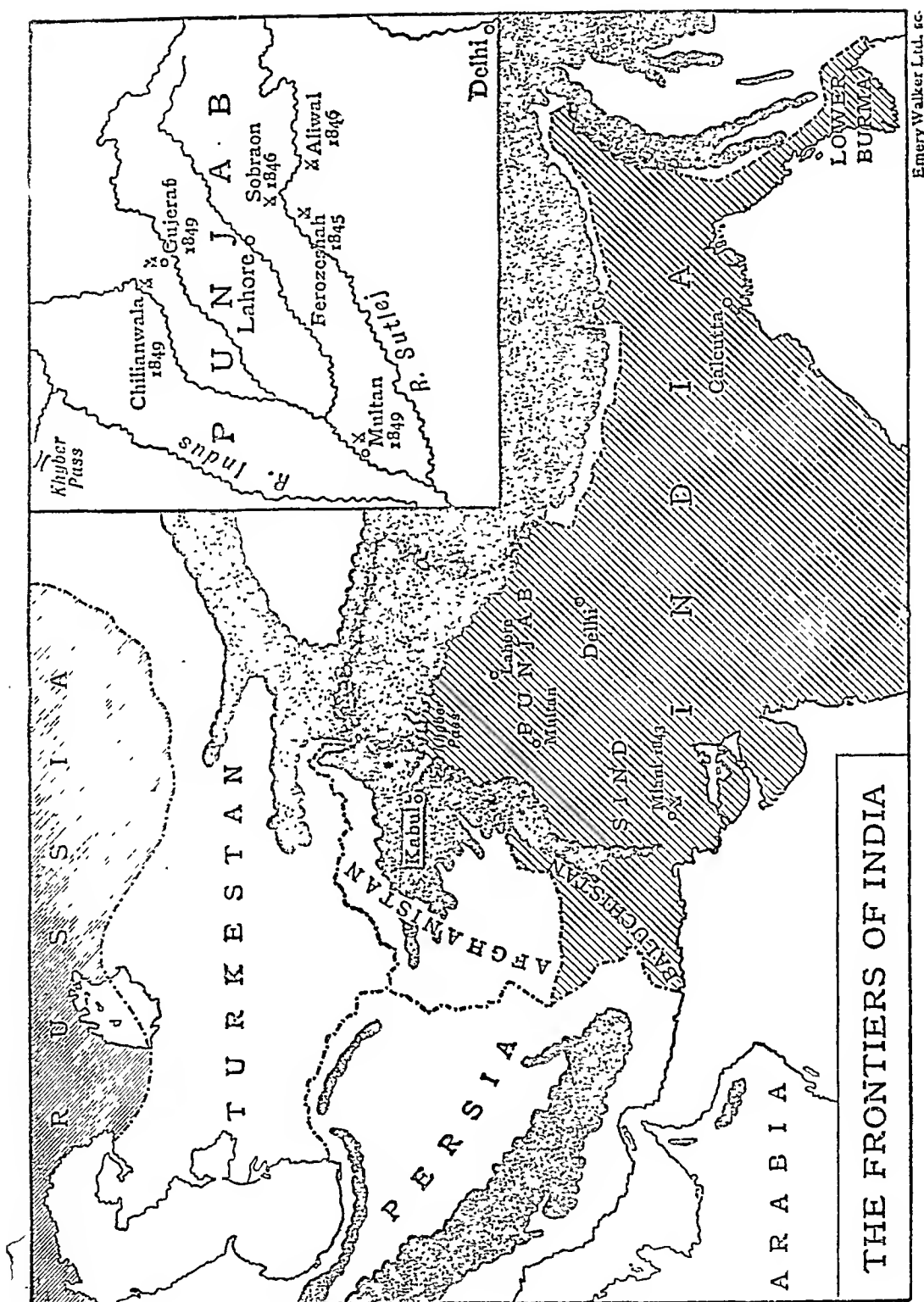
§ 95. *Moir and the Mahrattas.*—This soon proved to be an impossible policy. The only alternative to subjugating the Mahrattas was subjugation by them, and this calamity seemed to be drawing very near in the decade which followed the resignation of Wellesley. Lower grades of the Mahratta people, called Pindaris, made repeated raids on populations which the Company had undertaken to protect. They were nothing more nor less than bandits, who lived on the plunder of villages which they burned after slaughtering the inhabitants. Though not actually in the service of the Mahratta princes, they lived under their protection, and paid them tribute from their booty. Growing bolder in response to British inaction, they then began to attack territories under the Company's own administration. Reluctant as the Directors were to expend their dividends on warlike operations, it soon became clear that if they hesitated much longer they would be driven out of India altogether, when there would be a total cessation of dividends.

So the Government sent out Lord Moira to do what had to be **1813**

done. Moira was a hard-drinking, hard-living boon-companion of the Prince Regent, and he was now fifty-nine years old. He had hitherto had no military or administrative experience, but he soon showed that he was possessed of exceptional natural capacities in both directions, which his dissolute habits had obscured without impairing. He first dealt with the Gurkhas, a race of hardy mountaineers who had made several attacks on the Company's territories in Bengal. Two campaigns were required to reduce them to submission, but thenceforward they became whole-hearted supporters of the British dominion, and their splendid fighting qualities have ever since been exercised on its behalf instead of against it.

While Moira was thus occupied, the Pindaris made a raid on a bigger scale than ever before, and as soon as he was free he made the most elaborate preparations for a campaign which should make an end of the menace once for all. He spent a whole year in carefully mobilising all the forces at his disposal. While thus occupied he entered into negotiations with the Mahratta princes, seeking to overawe them by a display of force, and making use of their mutual jealousies to play them off against each other. As soon as he commenced operations against the Pindaris, however, they could not resist the temptation to attack him, with the result that their forces were shattered, and their power broken for ever, while the Pindari robber-bands were utterly destroyed. The Peishwa was deposed, portions of the Mahratta territories were annexed; and the "Pax Britannica" had been definitely established from the Sutlej to Cape Comorin by the time that Moira (who had by this time become Marquess of Hastings) left India in 1822. He was succeeded by Lord Amherst, who dealt with repeated raids by the Burmese on Eastern Bengal by annexing Assam.

§ 96. Bentinck and the New Spirit.—Then followed the Governor-Generalship of Lord William Bentinck, one of the most important epochs in the whole history of India. The administration of vast new territories had to be organised, and the servants of the Company to whom this task fell entered into it in an enlightened spirit which faithfully reflected the changed outlook of the Home Government, then just entering upon its great reform era. Soldiers and administrators and scholars, many of them devoted their whole lives to the study of Indian languages, history, literature, and philosophy.



Emery Walker Ltd. sc.



By a fortunate chance, the Company's Charter expired in 1833, and the Government thus had an opportunity of laying down the lines of the enlightened policy they wished to be pursued in the future. The first thing they did was, characteristically, to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the whole system of Indian Administration. It reported that the general aim should be to govern India according to Indian ideas, and as far as possible through Indian officials. The Company had surrendered its monopoly of trade at the last renewal of its Charter (1813): it was henceforth to cease from trading altogether, and confine itself to administrative functions. A lawyer was to be added to the Governor-General's Council; this official was to supervise the codification of Indian Law; and he was also to take some steps to organise Higher Education amongst the natives. This post gave great scope to the energies and abilities of Macaulay, who was the first Legal Member of the Council to be appointed. He was a man who always knew his own mind, and his views on educational questions were so very clear and definite that they carried the day. The most momentous results have followed from the fact that he was in favour of English being the basis of Indian education, rather than any of their own languages. This decision made possible the study of Western science, for which none of their own tongues would have the necessary vocabulary; and it gave all educated Indians a common language—one, moreover, peculiarly rich in books setting forth advanced ideas on liberty and self-government.

1829 Lord William Bentinck's name is always associated with two bold steps which he took in opposition to local religious customs—the abolition of *sati* and *thagi*. The first of these is the tradition (which may perhaps have been convenient to surviving relatives) that widows should commit suicide on the funeral pyres of their husbands; and the second was the amiable practice of a particular sect in North-Eastern India of murdering inoffensive wayfarers as a sacrifice to the goddess Kali. It was prophesied that all manner of dire results would come from this disregard of deeply rooted religious prejudices; but the reforms were brought about with little open opposition, though it took some years to bring them into full effect.

§ 97. Auckland's Adventure in Afghanistan.—All through the first thirty or forty years of the century the Czars were gradually absorbing the whole of Northern Asia into their Empire

and thus arousing in Britain that suspicion and hostility towards Russia which was one of the main features of British foreign policy for about fifty years. Our anxiety was chiefly for the security of our power in India, and it led Lord Auckland, who succeeded Lord Henry Bentinck as Governor-General, into a disastrous enterprise, undertaken to protect the very vulnerable approach to Russia from the north-west. This was the only possible route for a land-conquest of India, and it was a matter of vital concern to us that the Power which held the passes and the country immediately behind them should at least not be hostile. When, therefore, news was received that Russia had established some sort of protectorate over Persia, it was but natural that the British Government should try to forestall a similar development in the buffer state of Afghanistan. 1830

The steps taken by Auckland followed the traditional lines in such cases: he intervened in a succession dispute, and used the military forces at his disposal to make his nominee ruler over the country. Shah Sujah had been deposed from the throne of Afghanistan some years before in favour of his nephew Dost Mohammed, and was living in exile in India. A British Expeditionary Force was now sent to reinstate him at Kabul. This was accomplished easily enough—the difficulty was to maintain him there. The Afghans are a fierce, proud, and warlike race, and they had no mind to accept a sovereign at the bidding of any British Governor-General. They raised such a formidable rebellion against the restored Amir that the small British force which had been left to support him was hopelessly outnumbered. Its officers were treacherously murdered, and the best that it could do for itself was to make terms with the rebels by which it was to be allowed to evacuate the country unmolested. This was bad enough, but worse was to follow. The rocky and inhospitable passes had to be faced in the depth of winter; hundreds died of cold and fatigue, and the mountain tribes could not be restrained by any treaty-obligation from attacking the wretched remnant. In the end there was only one single survivor who won his way back to Jellalabad to tell the awful tale. 1841

§ 98. “**Advantageous and Humane Rascality.**” — Lord Auckland had to pay the price of failure: he was recalled forthwith. His successor, Lord Ellenborough, fitted out another expedition and sent it to Afghanistan to restore British prestige. It had no difficulty in inflicting a severe defeat on Dost Mohammed and his

partisans, but when this had once been accomplished the Government abandoned the attempt to interfere in the country's affairs. Dost Mohammed was restored to his throne, and gave a voluntary undertaking not to enter into any close alliance with Russia.

1843 This failure to make an effective buffer-state of Afghanistan led the British Government to seek a more defensible frontier than had hitherto existed. It became very important that the Indus valley should come under British control, and with this in view Lord Ellenborough provoked the Amirs of Sind to make an attack on the Company's territories in order that he might have a plausible pretext for annexing their country. This design was duly carried out after Sir Charles Napier had defeated the Amirs at the battle of Miani. It was a scarcely disguised piece of aggression on our part—almost the only example of such a proceeding in the history of our dealings with the rulers of India. Colonel Outram, "The Bayard of India," returned to England to protest against the action, and to represent the case of the Amirs to the Government; but the annexation was maintained and made permanent. The country had been misgoverned, and an ill-conducted state on the borders of British territory was a source of danger; but the whole episode suggested a certain unscrupulousness in its design and execution. Sir Charles Napier himself describes it in his Diary as "a very advantageous, useful, and humane piece of rascality."

§ 99. The Sikh Wars.—But a more serious struggle lay ahead, and this time it was not of our seeking.

The Sikhs are a sort of Puritan sect of Hindus, who have repudiated the grosser rites and superstitions which have grown up around the religion, and have adopted a severer code of morals and a simpler ritual. Like their English counterparts, they are splendid fighting men, to whom the military virtues seem to be the outgrowth of their vigorous creed. They are the military and ruling class amongst the inhabitants of the Punjab, "The Country of the Five Rivers," and are very proud of their prowess with sword and lance. Their army had been splendidly organised early in the nineteenth century by Runjit Singh, their most famous prince, but of late their rulers had lost all grip over them.

1844 After being tempted into permitting an aggressive policy under Lord Auckland, the authorities at home displayed the usual reaction, and when Lord Hardinge succeeded Lord Ellenborough

he came out with the fixed intention of leaving the Sikhs alone. In order to remove any possible cause of irritation, he reduced the forces on the frontier below the minimum required for safety. But this haughty, brave, and restless race were spoiling for a fight; and after our ignominious exit from Afghanistan, Hardinge's actions merely confirmed their growing impression of our weakness. They suddenly crossed the frontier with a powerful force, which was only driven back after a series of desperately contested engagements, of which the last and most famous was Sohraon. Even then the Company were content with very moderate terms of peace; the Sikhs retained their independence, but their ruler, the Maharaja Dhuleep Singh, was required to re-organise the government of the country with the advice of a British Resident, Sir Henry Lawrence. 1840

But the Sikhs were not satisfied. They were too proud to submit willingly to this protectorate system, and they were far from being convinced that the British were their superiors in the arts of war. Two years later they made a bold attempt to regain their complete independence. Hardinge had in the meantime been succeeded by Lord Dalhousie, who represented the other swing of the pendulum once more. He saw that half-measures were not only useless but dangerous; that as it had been with the Mahrattas thirty years before, so it was now with the Sikhs: the continued existence of British power in India was incompatible with their remaining an independent state. As a matter of fact, it proved no easy task to subjugate them. A desperate battle took place at Chilianwallah, of which the result was so indecisive as to be almost as damaging to British prestige as a total defeat. Steps were promptly taken to supersede the commander of the Company's forces, Sir Henry Gough; but before the proposed change could take place he had more than recovered his professional reputation by the brilliant victory of Gujerat. 1840

The Sikhs now submitted to the inevitable. The protectorate system set up by Hardinge having failed, Dalhousie decided on out-and-out annexation. He took over the entire government of the Punjab, and made it a model of administrative efficiency. The Sikhs were so impressed with the benefits of good government that in the terrible days which were soon to follow, when the British dominion in India was shaken to its foundations, the Sikhs who had taken service in the Company's forces never wavered in

their loyalty, and the successful issue of the episode was largely due to this fact.

A few years later, however, Burmah was annexed. The circumstances that led to this event ran a familiar course. Certain trading rights had been granted by the native ruler as a result of the war of 1824. These rights his successor sought to repudiate. The British merchants who had settled at Rangoon were treated with scant courtesy, and seemed to be in danger of losing their property. They appealed for support to the Governor-General, and when Dalhousie's demands were ignored, an expeditionary force (mainly of native soldiers) was sent from India. The European-trained troops carried all before them; the southern part of the peninsula was annexed, and rescued from the chronic disorder and misgovernment which had hitherto prevailed there.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain the difference in the problems of government which face the British in India and in Australia.
2. How far was the British conquest of India unintentional?
3. What results of Macaulay's appointment to be Legal Member can you see in India to-day?
4. What exactly was the "New Spirit in India?"
5. Has there been any more recent parallel of the position of the East India Company?

## CHAPTER XVII

“ 1848 ”

“ I am not one of those tame orators who say that liberty is not worth one drop of blood. Against this miserable maxim the noblest virtue that has saved and sanctified humanity appears in judgment. From the blue waters of the Bay of Salamis; from the valley over which the sun stood still and lit the Israelites to victory; from the cathedral in which the sword of Poland has been sheathed in the shroud of Kosciusko; from the sands of the desert where the wild genius of the Algerine so long has scared the eagle of the Pyrenees; . . . from the solitary grave within this mute city which a dying bequest has left without an epitaph—oh! from every spot where heroism has made a sacrifice a voice breaks in upon the cringing crowd that cherishes this maxim, crying, Away with it—away with it!”—THOMAS MEAGHER.

THE year 1848 was the *annus mirabilis* of revolution. The aspirations for Democracy and Nationality, engendered in the peoples of Europe during the years between 1789 and 1815, but crushed into silence by the reaction which followed, had never § 18 died. The union of the people of the same nationality under one State, in the government of which every citizen should have a share—this was the “liberal” ideal for which thousands of patriots had since suffered martyrdom. England and America were full of foreign exiles driven from their native lands by despotism.

The torch of revolution was kindled once more in France in the February of 1848, and it set the Liberalism of all Europe aflame. Within six months there were revolts in Spain, Italy, Prussia, Austria, Hungary, Bohemia, Saxony, Bavaria, Baden, Poland, Belgium, Ireland, and very nearly in England itself. Some of these won signal success for a moment, but none of them achieved its object, and most of them failed so disastrously as to put back the cause at which they aimed for a generation or more. The failure was due to internal rather than to external causes. The Liberals of 1848 looked upon “Liberty” as a matter of high ideals and fine phrases, of which they had abundance; but they

found that it demands qualities which can only be acquired after long and severe apprenticeship, and that the team-work which it involves can only be learnt by practice—in which they were altogether lacking.

We must now get a glimpse of one or two of these ill-fated movements, and notice their reaction upon our own country.

§ 100. “The Bourgeois Monarchy.”—The Bourbon Restoration had been imposed upon France in 1815 by the potentates of Europe. The French people themselves were glad to be rid of Bonaparte and his taxes in blood and money, but the new monarchy was not at all popular. The small farmer tilling his own precious bit of land—a class created by the events of 1789–94—was full of distrust lest the reactionary regime should disturb the land settlement on which his prosperity depended, while the doctrinaire republicans were disgusted at what seemed like the final overthrow of their ideals. When in 1830 Charles X tried to abolish the wretched simulacrum of a constitutional government set up in 1815, there was a revolt, and the Bourbon dynasty was once more driven from the throne. A “Constitutional Monarchy” was established, and Louis Philippe, Duke of Orleans, became “King of the French.”

Meanwhile the Industrial Revolution was making great strides in France, and the Orleans regime bore a certain resemblance to the contemporary era in Britain. It signalled the supremacy of the upper middle class, and was controlled in the interests of the new capitalists. “*Enrichissez-vous*” was said to be the motto of the State. The other class created by industrialism, the *ouvriers*, felt that their interests were neglected; and they began to adopt the socialistic doctrines of Louis Blanc, who taught that the instruments of production ought to belong to the community, and that industry should be carried on in “national workshops.”

Thus a new revolutionary outbreak was preparing. Formerly the aim had been to overthrow privilege; this time it was to redress inequalities in the distribution of the new wealth created by industry. Two other streams flowed into the current that was piling up against the dam: the old Republican tradition which still persisted amongst the educated classes, and the general disgust felt by all patriotic Frenchmen (especially those old enough to remember the glories of the Empire) at the very

undignified figure which “The Monarchy of July” cut in the eyes of Europe. The old Duke of Wellington summed up the situation when he said, “France needs a Napoleon! I cannot yet see him.” There was one, of a sort, not very far off.

§ 101. **The Second Republic.**—Despite the forces that were undermining it, Louis Philippe’s position appeared as strong as ever up to the very eve of its collapse. In February 1848, however, the Government unwisely forbade the holding of a public banquet by a hostile faction. There was an affray between the people gathered in the streets and the armed forces sent to prevent the banquet being held. Within an hour the disorder had grown so great that the panic-stricken old King dismissed his unpopular ministers. Finding that even this had not appeased the mob, he abdicated two days later and fled to England.

The Municipality of Paris was now in control of the situation. They declared France a republic, and summoned a Constituent Assembly to arrange the details of the constitution. Until it met, the administration was mainly influenced by the working men of Paris, who were indoctrinated with the theory that it was the duty of the State to provide subsistence for all. National workshops were started, and schemes for digging up the public parks undertaken, in order to find some semblance of work for the thousands who flocked in from all parts of the country to get money for nothing—or next to nothing. Obviously this could not go on indefinitely, and as soon as the Assembly met it became apparent that the *ouvriers* were not going to have matters all their own way. The peasant-in-possession was strongly represented in it, and he had no intention of burdening his land with heavy taxes in order to pay “doles,” however disguised, to town workers. The Assembly decreed forthwith that the *Ateliers Nationaux* should be closed and that arrangements should be made to send the provincial unemployed back to their homes. The “Reds” resisted the carrying out of these orders, and tried to get possession of the public buildings. Civil war flamed up in Paris, and more French officers lost their lives in one evening of this street fighting than in any of the great battles of the Empire. At length the new Government with the aid of the army were completely victorious, and the leaders of the vanquished workers were shot or exiled in hundreds.

The Second Republic was then organised. The chief feature in which it differed from the first, was that the head of the



Executive was to be a President, elected by the direct vote of the people. The first President so elected was Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the nephew of the great Emperor, who received something like seven-eighths of the votes cast. He had for years been fostering the Bonaparte tradition, and had made one or two ill-judged and somewhat ridiculous attempts to overthrow the monarchy, had been imprisoned in a fortress, and had lately been in exile in England. He now declared that "his name was a policy in itself." It stood for Orderly Government, National Glory, and Peace.

Thus the revolution had altogether failed to attain the objects of those who had been most active in promoting it: the conservative *paysan* had once more triumphed over the socialistic *ouvrier*.

§ 102. Action and Reaction in Central Europe.—The central states of Europe were ruled by a number of German kings and princes, of whom the most important were the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia. The Emperor was the traditional chief of these potentates, largely owing to his position as hereditary ruler of many non-German countries; for amongst his subjects were Hungarians, Poles, Serbs, Bohemians, and Italians. National feeling had been growing amongst each of these peoples ever since the time of the first Napoleon, but it had hitherto been successfully held in check by Metternich, the Chancellor of the Empire, who seemed to personify the anti-Revolutionary reaction. The growing power of Prussia was beginning to threaten the Austrian hegemony, but as yet there was no open rivalry.

1813-1814 Throughout all these German states the leaven of the first French Revolution was working strongly. It had inspired them to the patriotic fervour of the War of Liberation; and although it had since been crushed into quiescence there was still a yearning, especially among the well-educated and highly-intelligent middle class, for a national union of the different states into some sort of federal empire, in the government of which all the German people should share. The events in Paris now turned these aspirations into deeds. A revolt in Vienna drove Metternich into exile; while Hungary, Bohemia, and the Austrian dominions in Italy all shook off the rule of the Emperor. Even Frederick William of Prussia was hustled by a rising in Berlin into adopting constitutional government, and declaring himself in favour of the pan-German designs.

A Parliament in which all the German states, including Austria, were represented, was summoned to meet at Frankfort to discuss and establish a constitution for the new federal Empire. Unfortunately, it spent so long in the discussion that it never got as far as the establishment. While it was debating with great acuteness, learning, and eloquence such questions as the Fundamental Rights of all Germans, and the precise limits of Imperial and State affairs, a reaction took place. The Emperor recovered his Italian territories; the Austrian “ patriots ” were dismayed to find that the universal suffrage they demanded gave a non-German majority in their new parliament; and similar difficulties disconcerted the Hungarians at Pesth and the Bohemians at Prague. These dissensions gave an opportunity for the movements to be suppressed, though the Hungarian revolt was only put down with the aid of Russian troops. A cruel persecution followed, and the last state of the revolutionaries was worse than the first, by a great deal.

The recovery of the Emperor strengthened the hands and the courage of Frederick William. When the Frankfort Parliament at last offered him the Crown in a Constitutional Empire, he declined what he considered a doubtful honour. He would not, he said, stoop to pick up a crown out of the gutter. His refusal was a deathblow to the Frankfort Parliament, and it gradually faded away, as the revolutionary movement was crushed in state after state—in several cases by means of Prussian soldiers.

Thus the democratic and national revolution which had seemed to be so triumphant throughout Central Europe in 1848 collapsed completely in 1849, mainly through a lack of political experience in the liberals themselves.

§ 103. The First Stage of the “ Risorgimento.”—Metternich 1846-1849 once said that Italy was not a country, but a geographical expression. The peninsula was divided up amongst a number of potentates in much the same way as Germany, but with this difference, that in Italy several of these potentates were foreigners. Naples and Sicily were ruled by a Bourbon, Piedmont and Sardinia by a semi-Italian member of the House of Savoy, Tuscany had a Grand Duke, a broad strip across the middle was misgoverned by the Pope and his cardinals, and the Emperor of Austria “ owned ” Lombardy and Venetia. In no country had the principles of the French Revolution and its Bonaparte sequel taken so strong a hold, and in no country were those principles

so sternly repressed at the restoration of the Old Regime. The Press was muzzled, spies abounded, the prisons were full of untried "suspects," persons known to be educated "thinkers" were shadowed by the police. Railways and street lamps were forbidden in the Papal Domains because they savoured of advanced ideas. At any sign of rebellion against this sort of thing the Austrian army was called in to do the necessary repression. For a long time the only outlet for political ideas was secret societies such as the Carbonari, and the only method of countering despotism was by assassinating officials. There was little chance of unity amongst the liberals, and three distinct plans for the freeing and unification of their country were afoot amongst them. There was the Young Italy Movement led by Mazzini, which aimed at a federal republic of republics, something like the United States; there was the Catholic design of Gioberti for a federal state with the Pope as president; and there were those who looked to the King of Sardinia to wrest the other provinces from their rulers, and become a constitutional monarch over the whole Italian nation.

There had already been one or two abortive attempts to bring about the first of these schemes; there seemed to be a favourable prospect for the second when in 1846 Pope Pius IX declared himself in sympathy with constitutional government; and the third seemed to be under way when Austria's internal troubles in 1848 enabled Charles Albert, King of Sardinia, to invade Lombardy. The Pope's early liberalism having faded away, he was driven out of Rome by a revolution, and a republic was set up there under the influence of Mazzini. But Charles Albert failed to drive his advantage home, and thus gave the Austrians time to recover. He received a severe check at Custozza, which entailed the loss of all the ground he had gained, and he was decisively defeated at Novara. Garibaldi, the most famous of Italian patriots, who had long been a political exile in South America, had returned and had taken part in an unofficial way in the disastrous campaign in northern Italy. He now tried to organise the defence of the Roman Republic against the forces of reaction which were already threatening to overwhelm it. The victory of the Austrians at Novara set them free to fulfil their traditional rôle in the other Italian states, and the new French President was trying to gain the support of the Church for his personal ambitions by an armed intervention on behalf of the

Pope. After an heroic struggle the Italians were compelled to surrender the capital, the Pope returned to the Vatican, Garibaldi and Mazzini and their friends were driven once more into exile, and by the middle of 1850 the reaction was in full swing. Italy was destined to remain “ a geographical expression ” for another ten years.

§ 104. “ Young Ireland.”—We have seen in an earlier chapter how O’Connell began to agitate for the repeal of the Act of Union as soon as he had extorted Emancipation from a § 54 reluctant Parliament, and how he had made a bargain with the Whigs which the Protestant prejudices of their supporters prevented them from fulfilling. As soon as it became clear that the English parties could not or would not help him, he returned to his former method of holding great mass meetings in Ireland. He prophesied that 1843 was going to be “ The Great Repeal Year,” just as 1829 had been “ The Great Emancipation Year ” ; § 40 and he went about the country stirring up his audiences to enthusiasm and wrath on the subject of English misrule. The greatest of all such gatherings was announced to take place at Clontarf, near Dublin ; but when the Government intervened and forbade it, O’Connell, true to his life-long principle of never coming into conflict with authority, obeyed. This was the beginning of the end of his leadership. His control over the national movement had long been undermined by a group of fiery young enthusiasts, who longed for barricades and bloodshed ; and his tame acquiescence in this matter of the Clontarf meeting robbed him of the last remnant of his influence. Not long afterwards he died, a broken and disappointed man, while going on a pilgrimage to Rome.

Meanwhile, the agitation was carried on by other hands and 1842- other voices. The “ Young Ireland ” movement was frankly 1848 revolutionary : it aimed at nothing less than setting up an independent republic. Its figure-head was Smith O’Brien, alleged, like so many of his countrymen, to be descended from one of the ancient kings of Ireland ; but its leading spirits were a brilliant young orator of twenty-three named Thomas Meagher, and John Mitchel, who conducted a journal called—with what seems like a deficient sense of humour—*The United Irishman*. Neither of these men were Catholics ; the movement never had the support of the priests, and therefore made little impression on the peasantry. It was a highly cultured literary affair, carried

on mostly by well-to-do young men, who were steeped in classical traditions. The lofty eloquence of the quotation at the head of this chapter is typical of the ideas that inspired them; but it was not likely to appeal to poor ignorant cultivators of potato-patches, still suffering from the effects of the famine.

Much of the inspiration of the movement came from the traditions of the French Revolution of 1789, and that of 1848 stimulated it into breaking forth. It was a pitiable fiasco from the first. Mitchel filled *The United Irishman* with open incitements to rebellion, including detailed instructions as to the best way of throwing up barricades in the streets of Dublin and of crippling the hoofs of cavalry horses with iron spikes. His object was to get himself arrested, calculating that this would be the signal for an enthusiastic and unanimous rising of the people to set him free, which would set the ball of revolution rolling. He achieved the object, but proved to be mistaken in the calculation. The Irish nation took his imprisonment with complete calm. He and Meagher were convicted of High Treason and sentenced to transportation. Smith O'Brien continued to hold meetings in southern Ireland which culminated in a skirmish with the police amongst some cabbages. He too was transported, but was afterwards pardoned, and died in Wales.

§ 72 § 105. **The East Chartist Petition.**—In England the chief effect of the Revolution in France was a revival of the Chartist agitation, which had carried on a chequered existence for the past ten years. The resemblance between the two movements was not very close, however. Certainly, both were attempts to rectify the social and economic injustices inflicted on the working class by the Industrial Revolution; but whereas in France the aim was a sudden and violent overturn of the whole system of capitalistic production, the English Chartists still pinned their faith to legislative changes: if only the House of Commons would be so reformed as to render it responsive to the wishes and interests of "The People," all could be made right by Act of Parliament.

The central figure of this last phase of Chartism was Feargus O'Connor. He had learned the arts of agitation as a supporter of O'Connell, and his methods were strictly constitutional—mass meetings and petitions to Parliament. Like the "Young Ireland" men, many of the younger generation of Chartists yearned for a chance to strike an actual physical blow for their cause. O'Connor organised a "Monster Petition" with millions

of signatures. The people were to assemble in their thousands on Kennington Common, and, after suitable harangues from O'Connor and his supporters, to march to Westminster with the petition and impress the legislature by a display of overwhelming numbers. The more fiery spirits hoped that the Government would attempt to disperse the gathering by force, when there would be a violent collision, and the dogs of revolution would be slipped. But to the dismay of these enthusiasts, O'Connor decided the night before to abandon the procession at the orders of the Home Secretary. The meeting was held, but only a few thousand people attended—mostly spectators drawn by curiosity. The most elaborate arrangements had been made to defend London from “the mob,” but no mob appeared. The Monster Petition was brought to the Houses of Parliament in five cabs. It was presented by O'Connor himself in a speech in the course of which he declared that it contained 5,700,000 signatures “in round numbers.” When they were counted, however, these numbers proved to be very round indeed: there were not more than 2,000,000, of which a large proportion were obvious forgeries. The Queen's name occurred several times, and so did the Duke's, together with such flights of fancy as “Wooden Legs” and “Flat Nose.” The universal shouts of laughter which greeted these revelations destroyed the last remnants of the vitality of the movement.

But the real reasons for the disappearance of Chartism were deeper. Firstly, the period of acute distress of which it was the expression had come to an end, for all classes had some share in the great burst of material prosperity which came to Britain during the third quarter of the nineteenth century; secondly, the working classes began to turn their efforts to improve their position into other channels, such as friendly societies and trade unions. We must note in conclusion that the agitation did much to educate the workers in political ideas and methods; and that five out of the six demands of the Charter were afterwards granted, and are incorporated in our constitution at the present day.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What were the aims of the *paysan* and the *ouvrier* respectively? Is there any such contrast in England? If not, why not?
2. Compare the careers of O'Connell and O'Connor.
3. What were the general causes of the failure of the European revolutions of 1848?

## CHAPTER XVIII

### The Triumph of the Machines

"Machines are to be regarded as the mode of development by which the human organism is now especially advancing, every past invention being an addition to the resources of the human body. Even community of limbs is thus rendered possible to those who have so much community of soul as to own money enough to pay a railway fare; for a train is only a seven-leagued boot that five hundred may own at once. . . . True, from a low materialistic point of view, it would seem that those thrive best who best use machinery wherever its use is possible with profit; but this is the art of the machines—they serve that they may rule."—SAMUEL BUTLER.

DURING the summer of 1851, the Great Exhibition was held in Hyde Park. It gave an opportunity for all nations to exhibit their productions, for the first time in the history of the world. Those who organised it—amongst whom the Prince Consort was the leading spirit—hoped that it would not only stimulate international trade, but also promote peace on earth. The first object was to some extent achieved, the second not at all. For thirty-five years there had been no great European wars, but the very year of the Exhibition closed with the ill-omened *coup d'état* of Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, which was the indirect cause of twenty years of strife and bloodshed. The real significance of the Exhibition, as we look back on it to-day, was that it marked in a striking and unmistakable way the triumph of the Industrial Revolution.

This, then, is a convenient moment for us to take stock of the general effects of that great change in the conditions of human life of which the building of glass and iron in Hyde Park formed the apotheosis.

§ 106. The Age of Machinery.—In *Erewhon*, from which the quotation at the head of this chapter is taken, Butler foretells an age when the evolution of machinery will lead to its ruling man, instead of remaining a passive instrument in his hands. The

author's immediate object is to satirise the Theory of Evolution, but there is another pregnant truth behind his fantastic vision. Enthralment to a materialistic view of wealth and happiness, the degradation of human beings into the position of mere machine-minders, the domination over our lives of desires created by mechanical appliances—these were some of the striking aspects of this new age in the history of human development.

Engineering soon became one of the key industries of the Revolution, of which the very basis was the economy of mass-production. Machines can only be used profitably when large quantities of the same commodity, all made to the same pattern, are required. For the consumption of such commodities a wide market must be reached: hence the necessity which was the mother of invention of improved methods of transport—also by machines. The British had a long start amongst the nations of the world in mechanical engineering, owing to the fact that it was our textile manufactures to which these methods were first applied. Up to 1825 the export of machinery was prohibited by § 68 law, so that our advantage in the manufacture of fabrics might be preserved, and this restriction of output prevented our machinery being either so good or so cheap as it might have been. When it became obvious that it was futile to try to keep such things secret, and the restriction was removed, the engineering 1825 firms of the Midlands began to supply the whole world with machines. Hence a powerful stimulus to the getting and smelting of iron-ore; hence also the series of inventions which culminated in the Bessemer process of manufacturing steel. The iron ships 1850 and steel rails required for the development of transport were a special and urgent form of this demand. Then, again, the smelting of iron used large quantities of coal, and when the machines were made, more coal was required to drive them; and out of these demands grew another of the great modern key-industries.

**§ 107. The Canalisation of Capital.**—And here a new question arises. We have seen how the Industrial Revolution transformed the textile industry, and brought into existence a new class of persons who provided the money required as a preliminary to production, but it is obvious that the development of undertakings for machine-making, coal-mining, and transport all require an initial outlay far too heavy to be borne by any individual man. Whence came all the money to set them going?

The answer is twofold. In the first place, England was the



first country to develop a banking system sufficiently strong and flexible to be able to support widespread industrial activities. All through the eighteenth century the establishment of joint-stock banks was prohibited by Act of Parliament, in order to give the Bank of England a specially favoured position. In 1826 this restriction was limited to a radius of sixty-five miles round London, and in 1833 it was abolished altogether. An immense expansion of the banking system followed; people got into the habit of depositing their savings in banks instead of hoarding them in secret hiding-places about their homes, and these deposits and balances were put to a profitable use in financing productive enterprises.

1720 Secondly, much of the capital for the new industries was provided by groups of persons clubbing their money together in what are called "Joint-stock Companies." Until 1825, these were prohibited by law, for the experience of the South Sea Bubble made the Government feel that those who were financially interested in a business ought to be personally responsible for its management and for its debts. Even after 1825, the legal position of such corporations discouraged cautious people from investing their money in them; for if a company became insolvent, the whole of the property of each individual shareholder was liable to be seized to pay its creditors. This law may have had a salutary effect in checking "wild-cat" speculations, but it also cramped legitimate industrial expansion. The remedy was found in 1837, when the first Limited Liability Act was passed. Henceforth the organisation of such companies was regulated, and the personal liability of each shareholder was limited to the amount of his share. At once a new flood of wealth poured in to irrigate the industrial field.

Thus the term "capitalist" began to take on a new connotation. It was no longer limited to men who founded and managed business enterprises in person. Not a tithe of the capital at the back of modern industry is provided in this way. The modern capitalists are all the hundreds of thousands of people—rich and poor, male and female, great and humble, who have incomes derived from stocks and shares, or who have balances at the banks.

§ 108. Further Considerations upon Modern Capitalism.—The fact that it was in England that this credit system was first developed led to London becoming the financial capital of the

whole world—a pre-eminence which the City still holds, despite the increasing importance of “Wall Street” in New York, and of the Paris “Bourse.”

One great reason for the rapid swelling of this reservoir of the wealth available for investment was the fact that whereas the old landed aristocracy had traditions of a magnificent way of life, which would always have prevented them from accumulating any spare funds, the new middle classes had no such feeling. Amongst them, “success in life” meant acquiring the power and consideration which a man gained from being *known* to be wealthy. Thus profits were seldom dissipated in display, but were reinvested to produce more profits.

Another important point about mass-production is that it cheapens prices for the benefit of the consumer. Wages were still low, but the commodities produced became more and more available for the working classes, and their standard of living was gradually raised during the next half-century. We have had much to record in this book of the miseries inflicted on those classes by the Industrial Revolution; it is a relief to be able to feel that the worst was now over, for an increasing share of the new wealth created by the machines percolated down to the lower strata of society.

There was, however, an evil feature of large-scale production which we have hardly yet noticed—the alternation of “booms” and “slumps” in trade. An alert managing director discovers a new market for some particular kind of article. He borrows money from the bank, he lays down new “plant,” he takes on more “hands.” His rivals follow his lead and compete with him both for the raw material and for the labour to work it up. For a time all goes well; employment is plentiful and wages are high. Then comes the time when the market is fully stocked. Unless the manufacturers are particularly astute and well-informed they will go on producing long after this stage is reached, for goods are produced months ahead of consumption, and the raw material is sometimes ordered years ahead. As the demand falls off prices drop. Stocks must be got rid of even at a loss—they become “a drug in the market.” Mills are shut down, “hands” are discharged, banks restrict their credits. These alternate waves of prosperity and depression are usually widespread, for one industry affects many others—the wageless unemployed cannot buy food or clothes, for instance. They

seem to come in cycles, and students of the problems of economics have sought to discover the cause and cure of the phenomenon. Bad as they are for the capitalists, they are worse for the labourers, who have much less opportunity for saving against a rainy day, and have no control over the management of the business. And it is a phenomenon peculiar to the new industrial system : over-production was almost impossible in the old days of hand-loom and subsistence-agriculture.

§ 109. Mechanical Locomotion.—The great quantities of goods turned out to one pattern by mass-production are valueless unless they can be transported to the consumers. For centuries most of the English roads had been practically impassable except after a long spell of dry weather ; but with such potency did the desire for gain stimulate the human intelligence that scientific road-making and canal-digging were in full swing quite early in the development of the Industrial Revolution—indeed, that development could not proceed very far or very fast without a great improvement on the old methods of transport. And the impulse did not stop there : within a very few years a far more startling advance was made.

In the thousands of years during which he had inhabited the earth, man had never devised any method of locomotion except by the muscular action either of himself or of beasts of burden, with the single exception of the use of sails on the sea. But so powerful was the stimulus generated by the desire to profit by the Industrial Revolution that the almost immediate result was a world traversed in every direction by mechanical forces till then undreamed of. The expansive energy of steam was first used to pump the water out of mines, but the great difficulty in the way of applying it to transport was the waste of power involved in running such a vehicle on the roads. Water offered less resistance, and in 1812 *The Comet* began to make trips up and down the Clyde ; but the early steam-engine was so uneconomical of power that no ship could carry enough coal in her bunkers for a long voyage. Then George Stephenson hit upon the brilliant idea of combining the steam-engine with the railways already used for horse-wagons in the coal-mines. In 1826 he made the Stockton-Darlington Railway, but it was originally designed merely to enable horses to draw heavier loads than before ; and all Stephenson's energy and resourcefulness were needed to induce the proprietors to allow his newly invented

steam-locomotive to be used on it. A few years later the Liverpool-Manchester Railway was opened, and all the gruesome prognostications of the terrible effects upon the human frame of rushing through the air at fifteen miles an hour were effectively dispelled.

Then began the great railway boom of the 'thirties and 'forties ; by the date of the Great Exhibition there were 6,000 miles of railway-line in Great Britain. A considerable proportion of the capital employed was wasted, for the Government, in accordance with the current political doctrines, left the whole matter to private enterprise, with a minimum of State control. Unnecessary and competing lines were made, rival companies were formed simply to blackmail lines already existing, landowners extorted fancy prices for their land, country gentlemen and university dons refused to allow the accursed thing to come near their estates. Thus the railways cost about twice as much to construct as they need have done, and the interest on the superfluous capital still adds to the cost of running them. Gladstone, then President of the Board of Trade, provided for the purchase of the railways by the State at some future date, but his expectations were not justified by the event. The frenzy of speculation in railway shares had its natural result. So long as each £100 worth of stock is represented by £100 worth of actual property, all is well ; but if eagerness to buy that stock forces the price of it up to, say, £200, a collapse is bound to follow. The great railway slump of 1846 caused widespread ruin, and shook the London money-market to its foundations, though the financial elasticity of the age enabled it to recover in a very short time.

England's priority in industrialisation had led to a priority in railway construction, and the latter priority in turn confirmed the former. During the next thirty years and more we held an undisputed supremacy in the new phase of Western civilisation. Moreover, by the middle of the century, our marine engineers had succeeded in overcoming their original difficulties in engine design. The first important ocean-going steamship, the *Great Eastern*, was launched in 1838. In some ways this was a more important development for Great Britain even than the railway. Henceforth the expression "Oceanic Empire" takes on a new meaning.

Lastly, the transmission of information and of orders is almost as important for the development of the modern "world-market"

as the transport of the goods themselves, and this was facilitated by the invention of the electric telegraph in 1837. To-day, every ordinary mortal can outdo Puck's boast that he would put a girdle round about the earth in forty minutes. The idea which Shakespeare conceived as a miraculous suspension of the laws of nature is now a sober fact. So great was the power of the Industrial Revolution, that it caused our globe to shrink to about a quarter of its previous size in relationship to man.

§ 110. *Stability and Complacency.*—Thus there set in at about the time of the Great Exhibition a period of abounding national revenues, and of prosperous national self-confidence. The middle classes enjoyed both solid comfort and political power, combined with a complacent religious outlook by no means incompatible with the rapid accumulation of wealth. At the time this prosperity was attributed mainly to the exceptional capacity and integrity of the Briton as a man of business, and to the economic wisdom of the Free Trade policy of Peel and Gladstone, a policy which was held to mark the triumph of the middle-class manufacturer over the aristocratic landowner. As a matter of fact, the accidental circumstances which gave England such a big start over her future competitors was an important factor, and the discovery of gold in California and Australia, which tended to raise both wages and prices, was another. That Englishmen have no monopoly of business ability has been amply proved since, but at the middle of the century France was the only other country in which the new industrial system had made any considerable headway. The factories of the northern States of America were barely sufficient to supply the home market; and in Germany a public man remarked about this time that Germany would always be free from industrial difficulties, as she had no industrial population.

We have remarked upon the gradual improvement in the lot of the working class during this era; but it must not be inferred that the problems of the distribution of the new wealth had been solved. So far from that, it was only now that the nature and gravity of these problems was beginning to be realised. During the 'thirties and 'forties the humanitarian impulses and Benthamite common-sense of the age had led to a number of repairs and alterations to the existing fabric of government, designed to enable it to withstand the unaccustomed strains and stresses to which the new way of life subjected it; but very few

1849-  
1853

Englishmen would have admitted that a drastic re-construction was either necessary or possible. In France, however, another generation of "idealogues" like those who made the Revolution were prescribing new panaceas for the ills of the race. Saint-Simon in his *Nouveau Christianisme* had set forth what afterwards came to be called "Socialism," his idea being that wage-labour is only another form of serfdom, and that the world will only be regenerated by substituting the control of the wisest and best for that of hereditary castes. Fourier, on the other hand, did not seek to place the organisation of society under the control of the State at all; he advocated a form of social life in which the "commune," a group of workers, should collectively own the means of production, and should manage its own affairs.

But these fathers of a new political religion had few followers in England. Robert Owen's attempts to found communities on a plan similar to the "phalanges" of Fourier had collapsed, and left not a wrack behind. The Chartists had confined their aims to gaining control over Parliament. The development of trade unionism after the middle of the century had nothing revolutionary about it; it set itself to raise the status of the working class within the existing social and economic order.

That our civilisation owes a great deal to the energy and activities of "The Early Victorian Age" is undeniable, but that generation was so entirely absorbed in material prosperity that it starved much of the spiritual life of man. Its public buildings, its houses, its furniture, its clothes were all appallingly ugly; much of its religion was smug and superficial respectability; its taste in the fine arts was crude in the extreme. All other human attributes were subordinated to the one passion of acquisitiveness. To make money was the chief end of man; to be known to have made it was his glory. The division of labour and the mechanical appliances in which so much pride was taken, had turned workmen into drudges who experienced none of the joy of creation; but what did that matter, so long as they were creating wealth for the community? The current political economy was based on the axiom that every sane person wanted to get as much return for as little output as he could contrive. The age must have been sorely puzzled by the architectural beauties of our cathedrals, the result of a pride in workmanship combined with the ambition to do something for the glory of God! That we are now outgrowing the grosser forms of

materialism has been largely due to the teaching of a number of prophets, seers, and poets, such as Thomas Carlyle, John Ruskin, William Morris and Alfred Tennyson.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. How did England accumulate the wealth to capitalise the world? What evidence do you see to-day of her having done so?
2. Write the history of a "boom" in some particular industry in some particular locality, drawing on your imagination for the details.
3. Why are professional football and cinemas purely modern phenomena?
4. The invention of mechanical transport was one of the greatest revolutions in the history of mankind. Explain this, thinking out all the implications. What were the other chief steps of the sort in history?

## CHAPTER XIX

### “Civis Britannicus” at the Foreign Office

“Lord Palmerston had many good qualities, but God knows we had trouble enough with him at the Foreign Office.”—*Queen Victoria's Letters*, 1865.

THE thirty-five years between the two great Reform Bills has been called “The Era of Middle Class Rule.” Before 1832, Britain had been, in the main, an oligarchical state, and after 1867 she was in the main a democratical one; but during the interim, although the influence of the landed aristocracy was still strongly felt, it was tempered by the growing power of the merchants and manufacturers, the professional classes, the shopkeepers and superior artisans.

We have seen that after 1832 a flood of overdue legislation was let loose against which the Old Toryism had long stood like a dam. It was a singular anomaly that for the greater part of the first ten years of this epoch the Prime Minister should have been so intensely conservative a Whig as Lord Melbourne; but his Ministry was carried along by its younger members, and by the spirit of the age. That spirit was perhaps better typified by Peel, who succeeded him, and certainly by Lord John Russell, who in turn followed Peel; but by this time the impulse to set things to rights was gradually abating, and by 1850 it had practically worked itself out. A time had come when the desire to “rest and be thankful,” or rather to “rest and get rich,” came over the classes who were now most influential in the State. The hour produced the man. Lord Palmerston came into prominence during the early 'fifties, and remained the leading figure in political life until his death in 1865, mainly because he personified the prevailing instincts and ideals of this latter half of the mid-century era.

Thus, the personality of this remarkable man was of supreme



importance in the government of the country for some fifteen years, and it is with that personality, and the events which brought it into the foreground of the political stage, that we shall deal in this chapter.

1784-  
1865      § 111. "Pam."—Henry Temple, Viscount Palmerston, was a man who found his whole vocation in performing the functions of a Minister of the Crown. He was a Member of Parliament for sixty years, of which no less than forty-five were spent in office. He served under seven Prime Ministers, and was himself Prime Minister for nine years. First elected to Parliament at the age of twenty-one for a "pocket borough," he became a subordinate minister four years later, and was Secretary at War in the Ministry of Lord Liverpool. When the rift opened in that Ministry, he threw in his lot with the "enlightened" section, and resigned  
1809      with the other Canningites when the Government reverted to a  
§ 37      reactionary policy under the Duke of Wellington. In the Great Reform Ministry he became Foreign Secretary, and he was thereafter absorbed into the Whig Party, though he was never altogether accepted by the Whig clans as one of themselves. It is, indeed, characteristic of the exclusive and patrician prejudices of the Whigs that they always looked upon this third holder of an Irish viscounty as a *parvenu* upstart.

A man of the most amazing vitality, and inspired by a eupeptic zest in the details of administration, he took a particular delight in the ceaseless activities of the Foreign Office—through which, as he once boasted, something like 28,000 despatches pass in the course of a year. In many respects he remained a Canningite Tory till the end of his days. He carried on the policy of supporting the European "liberals" in their struggles for constitutional government, but in domestic legislation he took very little interest. Since he was attached to the Whig-Liberal Party he had to pay some sort of "lip-service" to Reform; but his real attitude was one of cynical disbelief in "ideas" and theories, and he almost represented the old tradition that administration and not legislation was the chief function of government. He had supported Catholic Emancipation and Parliamentary Reform because he felt that public opinion imperatively demanded those measures, but the position created in 1832—political power in  
§ 49      the hands of a ruling caste dependent on the goodwill of the middle class—was what exactly suited his character and outlook.

He had no pretensions to lofty intellectual ability, he was no orator, there was no air of mystery about him. He shared all the prejudices of the average Englishman, and embodied all the qualities he most admired. He had a supreme contempt for foreign potentates, and he loved to make them painfully conscious of the power of Britain. He had an insatiable appetite for work; his good humour and affability and self-confidence were imperturbable.

§ 112. **Belgian Independence.**—He may be said to have won his spurs as Foreign Secretary at the very outset of his career in that office. The French Revolution of July, 1830, had an immediate reverberation in the Netherlands, where it took on a nationalistic colour. Belgium had been annexed to Holland by the Congress of Vienna and the Dutch King had become King of the Netherlands. The Belgians had always resented their absorption. They were Catholic, and their language and literature and political outlook were French rather than Flemish. Nor had the Dutch done anything to soothe their irritation. Dutch members predominated in the Assembly; Dutch was made the official language of the whole kingdom, Dutchmen were constantly interfering in Belgian affairs. The Catholic Church, too, strongly objected to the Protestant domination, particularly as it affected education. In the August of 1830 the long-expected revolt broke out, and the Belgians claimed their independence. The Great Powers, having guaranteed the settlement of Europe in 1815, were bound to take some action in the matter. The revolutionary spirit which had just placed Louis Philippe on the French throne was in sympathy with the Belgians, but the ghost of the Holy Alliance raised its grisly head in the Governments of Russia and Prussia. Louis Philippe could not risk his throne by going to war with such opponents at the very outset of his reign; so he appealed to England to support the revolution, his ambassador being old Talleyrand, who had played such a conspicuous part in French politics throughout all the changes and chances since 1790. This was just the sort of situation that Palmerston enjoyed—supporting continental liberalism and thwarting continental potentates. He succeeded in getting the whole question referred to a Conference in London, and Belgian Independence was formally recognised early in the following year. Then a new difficulty arose. The Belgians wanted the Duc de Nemours, second son of Louis Philippe, as their king; but

Palmerston would not consent to see the country turned into a French dependency (it has always been a cardinal doctrine of English policy that the Netherlands shall not be in the hands of any of the Great Powers), and by a combination of tact and firmness he procured the selection of Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, the uncle of the future Queen of England.

§ 113. *Victoria and Albert.*—The Princess Victoria came to the throne in 1837, on the death of her uncle, the old King William IV. She was an unsophisticated girl of nineteen, who had been brought up by her mother in the strictest seclusion, and had been very imperfectly educated according to modern standards. In 1840 she married her cousin, Prince Albert of Coburg. This was what such alliances rarely are, a genuine love-match; but for some years the young prince was kept very much in the background. The Queen was under the guidance in all public matters of the kindly and tactful old Lord Melbourne. She looked on the declining credit of the Whig Government with dismay, for it brought ever nearer the day when he would be replaced by the cold, awkward, ungracious Peel. "What we shall do now that there's a lady on the throne I can't imagine," said the old Duke; "for I've no small talk, and Peel has no manners." When the inevitable came at last, however, she quickly became reconciled to it; and the removal of Lord Melbourne did much to advance the position of her husband, especially when children arrived to be a bond of union between the royal pair. By degrees the Prince advanced in Victoria's esteem and confidence, until, after about 1843, her devotion almost amounted to idolatry. "Oh! my dearest uncle," she wrote to the King of the Belgians, "I am sure if you knew *how* happy, how blessed I feel, and how *proud* I am of possessing such a perfect being as my husband, it must gladden your heart." He gradually gained a complete ascendancy over her mind and policy. He acted as her private secretary, he shared her interviews with Ministers and Ambassadors, and became an unofficial intermediary in all delicate matters of State.

1819-  
1861

Thus the character of the Prince Consort (as he was soon entitled by special Act of Parliament) exercised considerable influence over the government of the country for the next twenty years. There was something very German about Albert. He was a young man of blameless character; and his puritanical outlook converted the Court from a tendency to innocent frivolity to the

air of sober, not to say sanctimonious, decorum which marked it during the latter half of the nineteenth century. He was well-educated, high-minded, intensely conscientious and laborious, rather slow-witted, and totally devoid of a sense of humour. He made it the work of his life to study the welfare of the country of his adoption, and to uphold the position of the monarchy in its constitution. Ten or twelve hours a day he devoted to the study of social and political problems, to the laborious writing of memoranda, to interviews and consultations with artists, engineers, scientists and politicians, on all sorts of subjects—Foreign Office despatches, frescoes for the walls of the South Kensington Museum, improved methods of drainage, the plans for the Great Exhibition, details of the Royal Household. In fashionable circles he was regarded with contempt and dislike, for his tastes were altogether alien to those of the English aristocrat: he did not smoke or drink, or gamble, or dance, or ride to hounds; he was deeply interested in applied science, was very fond of music, and took far too serious a view of life to have time or inclination for mere pleasure-seeking. Above all, he was a foreigner; and no interest in such bourgeois matters as the development of British industries could compensate for this crime. For many years he was misunderstood and unpopular. The fact that he did not “get on” with the English people weighed on his spirits; but it did not deter him from what he conceived to be the sacred duties of his position.

§ 114. Lord Palmerston Apologises.—During the five years 1846-1851 of Peel's rule Victoria's views about the political parties were considerably modified. No longer did the easy-going ideas of old Lord Melbourne dominate her mind. The temperament of the reserved, earnest, thoughtful Peel was so sympathetic to that of her beloved Albert that she was just as reluctant to see his term of office come to an end (over the Corn Laws) as she had been to see it commence.

Her anticipations of trouble with Lord John Russell's Government were well founded, for it was not long before difficulties began to arise between the royal pair and Lord Palmerston, who had returned to his old post at the Foreign Office almost as a matter of course. Foreign affairs are precisely the department of State with which the Sovereign in constitutional governments has most direct concern, and it has generally been found advisable to select as Foreign Secretary some one who is on good

terms with the Court. But Lord Palmerston was not : quite the reverse. He had long experience in the office ; he was supremely self-confident ; he deferred to no one in his conduct of it—not even to the Prime Minister, much less to the German princeling who was now the Queen's confidential adviser. He had a poor opinion of foreigners in general ; and the antipathy between him and Albert went right down to the very nature of the two men. The Prince was all for methodical and conscientious discussion of principles ; but " Pam " had no conscience, and very little idea of what principles were—and in any case he was far too sure of himself to want to discuss anything with anybody.

It is the constitutional custom that all despatches to ambassadors abroad shall be sent for approval to the Sovereign and to the Prime Minister before being sent off ; but Palmerston often omitted to do so, or disregarded any suggested emendations. The Queen got angry, so did the Prince ; they complained to Lord John, who also got angry ; they all three protested to the Minister—but he never got angry. He apologised good-humouredly—" so short of time "—" he really must give those clerks a wiggling "—" it should not occur again." But it did occur again—and again. Even when the Queen sent a curtly worded threat of dismissal, such as would have made most men resign, he once more promised amendment (rather more humbly, this time), but was back again at his old tricks within a fortnight. The Queen and the Prince besought Lord John to dismiss him ; but the Prime Minister felt that " Pam's " popularity was a valuable asset to the ministry.

1850 § 115. " Don Pacifico."—On one occasion, at least, it seemed to them that their enemy had delivered himself into their hands.

Among the disturbances which took place in almost every country of Europe during the years 1848-49, there was a riot at Athens, in the course of which damage was done to the property of a Levantine Jew known as Don Pacifico. Having been born at Gibraltar, he was technically a British subject ; and he now called upon the Foreign Office in London to enforce his claims against the Greek Government. That Government was quite ready to meet any fair assessment of the damage, but those of the worthy Don were fantastically exaggerated. Lord Palmerston took the case up with his usual energy ; and when the Greeks declined to pay more than a reasonable amount he put pressure

on them by sending the British fleet into Greek waters. Before this formidable threat the luckless Greeks had perforce to submit; but a great many people at home in England were scandalised at such a use of the national forces, and a Vote of Censure was moved in the House of Commons. If it were carried, the Foreign Secretary would have to resign. The hopes of the Queen ran high, for Disraeli, Cobden, and Gladstone, three of the ablest debaters in the House, and men of very different types and party connections, were all supporting it. The "Don Pacifico Debate" was one of the most famous and brilliant in the history of the House. Disraeli made the members roar with laughter at the Maltese Jew and his ridiculous pretensions; but Palmerston rose to the occasion, and made the speech of his life. He reminded his hearers that in the high and palmy days of ancient Rome, a Roman could always say, wherever he went: "Civis Romanus sum," and know that the strong arm of the Empire would be stretched out to protect him from injury or molestation. Even so ought the Briton of to-day to be able to say: "Civis Britannicus sum." This superb piece of bombast took the House by storm. It was in vain that Gladstone pointed out that the analogy was false, since Rome was in those days the mistress of the whole civilised world—a position which even Lord Palmerston could hardly claim for England. The Motion of Censure was defeated by a decisive majority. "Pam" was vindicated, and his popularity rose higher than ever. Fate seemed to be on his side, for on the very next day Sir Robert Peel was thrown from his horse in the Park, and received injuries from which he died. Thus his only rival in popular favour was removed from the scene. He went on his jaunty and self-assured way for another twelvemonth; but then the pitcher which had come back so often safely from the well got broken at last—though not beyond repair.

§ 116. "My Tit for Tat with Johnny Russell."—Across 1851 the Channel, Louis Napoleon Bonaparte, the President of the 1852 Second Republic, was "embodying the Napoleonic tradition" with a vengeance. Just as the uncle had reduced the consulate constitution to a nullity, so the nephew set to work to undermine the republican constitution he had sworn to uphold in 1848. He § 101 quarrelled with his Parliaments, cultivated the favour of the army, got his personal supporters as Ministers, and finally carried out the famous "Coup d'État," when he suddenly arrested his 1851

political opponents, cleared the streets with military force, and established the Second Empire.

The British Government did not quite know what to make of all this, and decided not to commit themselves to approval or disapproval of it until matters had settled down somewhat. But the Foreign Secretary had no difficulty in making up *his* mind. He had always supported Napoleon; and, despite perfectly definite orders to the contrary from both Queen and Premier, he forthwith assured the French Ambassador of his hearty support of the new régime. When the facts came to light, a few days later, Lord John was compelled to take decisive action, and Palmerston was summarily dismissed. Victoria and Albert were beside themselves with joy.

But Lord Palmerston was a bad man to beat. He took his dismissal with his usual good humour, and was all smiles and affability and helpfulness to his successor. He knew the forces on his side; he had a considerable personal following in the House, and was immensely popular outside it. Within two months of his fall he had his "tit for tat," as he called it with characteristic jocularly. He joined in an attack on the Government over some minor point, led his supporters into the Opposition Lobby, and defeated the Ministers by such a decisive majority that they were compelled to resign.

1852-  
1853

§ 117. Interregnum and Coalition.—Thus the personal jealousies between the Whig leaders had put the Protectionist Tories in Office long before any one had expected it. Lord Derby was Prime Minister, with Disraeli as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the House of Commons. Their position was very difficult, however. Apart from the Prime Minister himself, no member of the Cabinet had any experience of office. Moreover, the country gentlemen who formed the backbone of the party would expect them forthwith to re-enact the Corn Laws; but this policy would at once re-unite the Whigs and Peelite Tories, and against such a combination they could not stand for a week. A General Election did nothing to improve their position, and they were defeated on their Budget, which was a half-hearted sort of measure, which neither pleased their friends nor conciliated their foes. Thus ended the first Derby-Disraeli Interregnum.

The Whigs were so divided between the Russell and Palmerston camps that there seemed to be little chance of getting them to work together. After much fruitless negotiation—in which

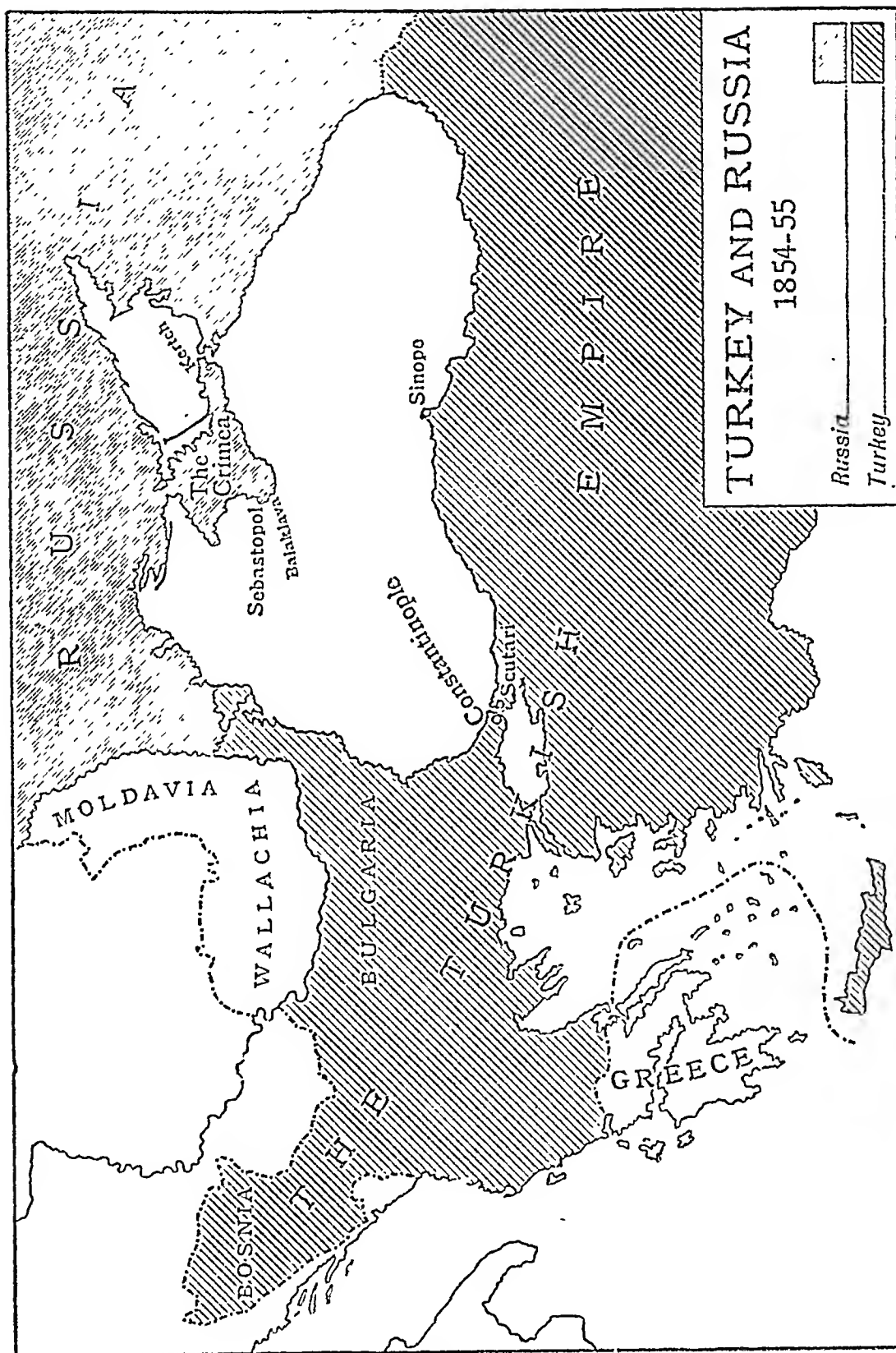
the Prince Consort played a considerable part—Lord Aberdeen, the leader of the “Peelites,” agreed to be the head of a Cabinet formed partly of his own followers and partly of Whigs, provided that both the rival Whigs would serve under him. Lord John became Foreign Secretary, while Lord Palmerston took over the Home Office, where he would be least likely to come into contact with the Court. The other offices were equally divided between Whigs and Peelites; for although the latter were but a small group numerically they included half a dozen men of marked ability. The most famous of these was William Ewart Gladstone. 1809-1898 He had held subordinate office under Peel, and had done much of the spade-work in preparing the fiscal reforms of 1842-46. He now became Chancellor of the Exchequer, and his first Budget at 1853 once established him as one of the ablest financial ministers in our history. In amplifying the Free Trade policy of his former chief, he was compelled to keep the Income Tax on, but he laid down a definite programme by which it was to diminish year by year, until in 1860 it was to disappear altogether. Meanwhile “Pam” entered with much gusto into the multifarious details of Home Office administration, and was as breezy and off-hand in dealing with deputations as he had formerly been with foreign ambassadors. His robust common sense enabled him to carry through with success a number of useful minor reforms.

The Ministry contained nearly all the ablest men in public life, but when it was formed Disraeli had reminded it that “England does not love Coalitions,” and it is true that such combinations have always been very short-lived. Even before this one came into existence there was trouble brewing in the Near East which was destined speedily to bring about its downfall, to falsify all Gladstone’s financial calculations, and to make Lord Palmerston “the man of the hour.”

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What other coalitions have there been in English history?
2. Can you defend Palmerston’s idea of “Civis Britannicus”?
3. How was it that *Lord* Palmerston and *Lord* John Russell were both members of the House of Commons? Mention other instances of both kinds.
4. Write letters for Victoria, Russell, and Palmerston about despatches not being properly dealt with.





## CHAPTER XX

### “ A Crime ”

Let it go or stay, so I wake to the higher aims  
Of a land that has lost for a little her lust of gold,  
And love of a peace that was full of wrongs and shames--  
Horrible, hateful, monstrous, not to be told ;  
And hail once more to the banner of battle unroll'd !  
Tho' many a light shall darken, and many shall weep  
For those that are crushed in the clash of jarring claims,  
Yet God's just wrath shall be wreaked on a giant liar . . .  
For the peace that I deem'd no peace is over and done,  
And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic deep,  
And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress, flames  
The blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire.”

TENNYSON, *Maud*.

ONE day when John Bright was passing the Guards' Memorial in Pall Mall with his little son, the youngster asked the meaning of the single word CRIMEA carved on its base ; and the great tribune grimly replied with the anagram which we have used as a title for this chapter.

Certainly, of all our wars this was the most unnecessary, the most bungled and the most fruitless. We went into it without adequate cause and without adequate preparation ; our soldiers suffered cruelly for the faults and stupidities of our rulers, and there were moments when a disastrous outcome seemed to be threatened. The army and the nation pulled through in the end, partly owing to our capacity for learning from our mistakes, and partly to sheer dogged determination ; but the ultimate consequences were very unlike the objects for which it was fought. Altogether, a typical British war !

§ 118. “ The Eastern Question.”—There were wars and rumours of wars in Europe over what is called “ The Eastern Question ” for nearly a hundred years, beginning with the Greek War of Independence in the 'twenties, and ending with the § 35 Great War of 1914-18. The elements of the situation were peculiar. The Turks, an Asiatic and Moslem people, had conquered the nations that inhabit the Balkan Peninsula. These Balkan peoples belonged to the Greek branch of the Christian § 55

1774 Church, of which the centre was in Russia. The Sultans misruled and ill-treated their Christian subjects; and the Czars felt bound to intervene on behalf of their co-religionists. They gained the right to do so by the Treaty of Kutchuk-Kainardji, but the limits of this right were not very clearly laid down. It might have been supposed that the Powers of Western Europe would have welcomed this salutary check on the misgovernment of fellow-Christians by infidels, but any such feeling was more than counteracted by their jealousy and suspicion of the increasing preponderance of Russia in Eastern Europe and in Northern Asia. If the Czars gained a paramount influence in the Balkan Peninsula they would be able to control the Levant; and this would upset that "Balance of Power" which it had so long been the object of European statesmen to preserve.

§ 97 The ruling classes in England were particularly suspicious of Russian designs on India—a general feeling that was as it were personified by that typical Englishman, Lord Palmerston. This feeling was at the back of Lord Auckland's disastrous attempt to control Afghanistan; and now "Pam" had an additional grudge against the reigning Czar for his stern repression of the revolts in Poland and Hungary in 1848-49, the fostering of continental "liberals" being another of his characteristic traits.

§ 102 This anti-Russian feeling was shared by most of the rulers of Western Europe, but the Czar's bitterest enemy at the moment was the new Emperor of the French. Napoleon III was particularly anxious that his regime should be associated in the minds of the French people with "glory"—one of the essential features of the Bonaparte tradition which he had undertaken to restore when he was elected; and he was, therefore, seeking for some opportunity for waging a successful war. He had read some history books, and was convinced that the main cause of his uncle's downfall had been his hostility to England. It was, therefore, very desirable that he should have English support in his glory-winning campaign—a condition that would be perfectly fulfilled by a war with Russia. Moreover, the Czar had shown a marked lack of cordiality in recognising him as Emperor.

§ 101 Thus there was an inclination both in England and in France to pick a quarrel with Russia, and in 1853 it was fomented by the Czar's own actions. He sent a special envoy to Constantinople to demand from the Sultan an explicit recognition of his right to protect the Balkan Christians. The Turkish

Government was in a bad way, both from a military and a financial point of view, and the Sultan would probably have given way had it not been for the British Ambassador, Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Stratford shared all Palmerston's antipathy to Russia. He was determined that the Czar should not be allowed to domineer over the Sultan, and that British influence should be paramount at Constantinople. Egged on by him, the Sultan refused to give the required assurances; and when the Russians occupied two Turkish provinces at the mouth of the Danube to enforce their claims, war was declared. Oct. 1853

§ 119. *Drifting into War.*—Lord Stratford was acting independently of the British Government in adopting this line, for Lord Aberdeen was above all things a lover of peace, and so were several of his colleagues; but the aggressive policy had the support of public opinion in general, and also of a section in the Cabinet—particularly of Palmerston and John Russell. This division of opinion within the Ministry was one of the main causes of the war. If the Sultan had felt that in no circumstances could he look for any active support from Britain, he would not have taken such a high tone in the dispute—but he counted on Palmerston and Russell. On the other hand, if the Czar had felt that if he pressed his demands he would inevitably bring on himself a war with Britain, he would never have done so—but he counted on Aberdeen and Gladstone. The unfortunate Prime Minister—the most high-minded and conscientious of men—was driven by his very anxiety to avoid war into taking a succession of steps that led to it; for the anti-Russian feeling was so strong in the country that if he had flatly refused to make any concession to it his Ministry would have certainly been defeated in the House and replaced by one under the leadership of Palmerston or Russell, which would have gone to war immediately. This was why he consented to send the British fleet to join the French in Turkish waters with a sort of watching brief.

The feelings of the average Englishman at the moment are well expressed by Tennyson's lines at the head of this chapter. Fear of the Czar's designs on India were mingled with hatred of him as an oppressive and reactionary tyrant, and with a thirst for the adventures and thrills of warfare, after forty years of the drab stagnation of peace.

The Governments of Europe had attempted to mediate; they consulted together and drew up “The Vienna Note,” which

set forth a proposed settlement of the matters in dispute. The Czar accepted it, but the Sultan—still under the influence of Stratford—refused. It would seem as if Turkey had put itself hopelessly in the wrong by this action, but the feeling of distrust and hatred towards the Czar was as strong as ever, both in England and in France; and when Russian ships, by a perfectly legitimate act of war, destroyed the Turkish fleet in the Bay of Sinope, popular indignation boiled over. There was no logic about this attitude: it was just blind prejudice and passion. The English and French Governments presented a joint Note to the Czar, demanding the evacuation of the Danubian Provinces and the withdrawal of the Russian fleet from the Black Sea. When this was refused, they declared war.

Nov.  
1853

Mar.  
1854

§ 120. Another Peninsular War.—Our first attempt at taking part in hostilities was a ridiculous failure. Sir Charles Napier was sent with a fleet to make an attack on Russia in the Baltic. After an elaborate farewell banquet at the Reform Club, at which Lord Palmerston made a speech full of bombast and flippant levity, Sir Charles set sail for the Baltic, did nothing whatever there, and came back home again.

Mar.  
1854

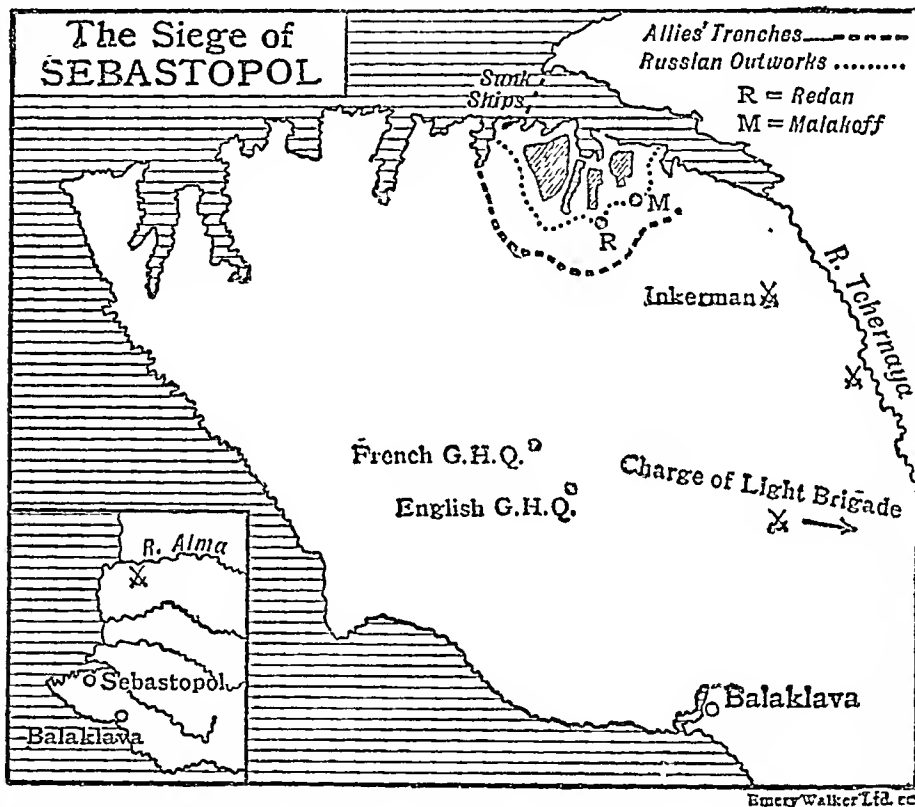
Meanwhile the Allies had agreed upon a joint invasion of the Crimean Peninsula. There were several plausible arguments in favour of the scheme. The immediate object would be to destroy Sebastopol, the base of the wicked Russian fleet that had fallen upon the poor Turks at Sinope. Moreover, we should enjoy the same advantage which we had had in the last war we had waged on a peninsula: the place would be very accessible to our ships, while for a land Power with no command of the sea it would be very difficult to keep supplied with munitions and reinforcements, for the Steppes of Southern Russia would be almost as great an obstacle to Nicholas as the Pyrenées and the mountains of Spain had been to Napoleon.

1808-  
1814

The officers to command the allied forces were not such as to inspire confidence, however. Lord Raglan was a Peninsular War veteran, a fine old gentleman, but hopelessly behind the times. His senile absent-mindedness is brought home to us when we learn that in discussing the situation with our allies he often alluded to the enemy as "The French." The latter were commanded by Marshal St. Arnaud. He was one of the Emperor's personal supporters—indeed, it has been said that he owed his appointment not to what he knew about war, but to what he knew

about Napoleon III. In any case he was suffering from a painful malady of which he died shortly after, and this sapped any mental vigour or fighting power which he might otherwise have displayed.

The combined army, consisting of about 40,000 French troops and 30,000 British, landed unopposed on the western side of the peninsula in September, 1854. When they turned southwards to march on Sebastopol, however, they found the Russians barring their way on the farther bank of the River Alma. The Russian position had been chosen with great skill, but a brilliant



victory was gained, and had it been followed up relentlessly there is little doubt that the Allies could have entered Sebastopol almost without striking another blow. St. Arnaud refused to stir from the banks of the Alma for several days, however, on the plea that his men were tired—a statement which was doubtless well founded, but which seemed irrelevant when a couple of days' march would bring the campaign to a prompt and triumphant conclusion. By the time the Allies appeared before Sebastopol the Russian commander, Todleben, had had time to fortify the place. The only course now was to open trenches and start a regular siege.

For this contingency they were quite unprepared: they had not enough men for a complete investment, and they had no heavy artillery. Meanwhile, the Russians had sunk several ships at the mouth of the harbour, and had thus made the port quite impregnable from the sea. So the Allies sent home for their siege-trains, and settled down to face the winter as best they might.

1854- § 121. "The Crimean Winter."—Neither army had been  
1855 equipped with a view to a long campaign of any sort, much less to one in the severe winter weather of those regions. The French army was not well-organised, but it would hardly be exaggerating to say that the British army was not organised at all. Forty years of peace had altogether undermined the efficiency attained under Wellington; everybody concerned had forgotten what a war was really like. The organisation of supplies was chaotic; different departments were responsible for munitions, for hospital stores, and for clothing, and between these departments there was practically no *liaison*. Nepotism (the finding of "soft jobs" for the relatives of influential people) was rampant, both at the front and in the administration at home. Everywhere the most fatuous optimism prevailed—the attitude of mind which comforts itself with the reflection that "we managed all right in the last war, and can do so again."

Out in the Crimea the soldiers had to pay the price for this pleasant frame of mind. There was no proper shelter, nor any supply of warm clothing. Cholera and dysentery broke out as the result of unsuitable food and bad water, and medical arrangements to deal with these diseases hardly existed at all. Supplies were carried backwards and forwards over the Black Sea for lack of sufficient organising power to load the ships properly. Boots and great-coats, essential to the very lives of the men in the trenches, were piled up on the beach at Scutari, five hundred miles from the Crimea, in order that the medical stores for the hospital there might be got out. The transport arrangements necessary to convey food and clothing from Balaklava, the British base, up to the trenches broke down completely; men were dying of cold and hunger for lack of the supplies that were rotting on the beach less than ten miles away. Then in November a great storm blew away the tents and left the men exposed to torrents of rain and icy winds, without so much as a blanket to cover them.

Amid these appalling miseries the men showed unfailing steadfastness of spirit and an invincible courage in the face of the enemy. Two great attempts were made by the Russians to

raise the siege, which led to the battles of Balaklava and Inkerman. The former was remarkable for the famous charge of the Light Brigade, when the lives of hundreds of brave men were uselessly thrown away through the stupidity and bad temper of senior officers; while Inkerman took place in a fog so dense that the higher command was unable to interfere, and the men won the battle by sheer grit and fighting spirit.

§ 122. William Russell and Florence Nightingale.—This was the first European war fought since the invention of the electric telegraph some ten years before: hence the appearance of a new phenomenon—the “ War Correspondent.” Nowadays the functions and limitations of newspaper reporters at military operations are well understood, and during the Great War a special department of the Headquarters Staff was employed to supply them with information and to censor their despatches. But the unfortunate commanders of the British forces in the Crimea had no precedents to guide them. William Russell of *The Times* was allowed to go where he liked, to see what he liked, to talk to whom he liked, and to write what he liked to his employers at home. The consequence was that the Russian high command was kept in close touch with the disposition of the allied forces and with the intentions of the allied commanders—in fact, they knew a good deal more about some of these matters than most of the British officers themselves.

But if *The Times* despatches were a handicap to the success of the campaign in this direction, they contributed powerfully to it in another. Russell saw with his own eyes the miseries of the troops and the scandalous lack of hospital and sanitary arrangements. His ruthless exposure of these shortcomings may have comforted the enemy, but it aroused the attention of the public in England, which was the first step to their being remedied.

An immediate result of the outcry was that a well-to-do Society lady, a Miss Florence Nightingale, came forward and volunteered to go and re-organise the hospital arrangements. She was exactly fitted for the task. Dissatisfied with the usual frivolities of young ladies in her position, she had taken up sick-nursing—an unheard-of occupation in those days for any woman of higher social position than “ Mrs. Gamp.” She was now thirty-three years of age, and had just returned from studying hospital organisation abroad. It seemed as if her whole life had been a preparation for this crisis. Her offer was accepted by the distracted Government, and within a week or two she sailed with



a party of other ladies to cleanse the Augean Stables of Scutari. The task might well have daunted Hercules himself. The hospital was a disused Turkish barrack, with no sanitary arrangements whatever. Nobody had seen a cake of soap there for months; there were no plates or knives or forks; the most ordinary drugs and surgical appliances were altogether lacking; the food was mostly uneatable and the water poisonous. The whole organisation had collapsed, and the patients were dying off by hundreds through sheer neglect. Then this frail, gently-nurtured woman began a terrific battle, not only with the unavoidable difficulties of the situation, but with those caused by the officialism and incompetence and concealed hostility of the army medical authorities. She spent thousands of pounds of her own money in buying hospital stores, and *The Times* opened a public subscription to support her. In the end she won. The death-rate in the hospital was reduced from 42 per cent. to 2 per cent. in six months, and by the end of the war it was a paradise of cleanliness and comfort compared with what it had been. When she returned home, after peace was declared, she was a permanent invalid, but she lived another sixty years, devoting herself to setting the army hospitals on a sound footing, and to raising the status of nursing as a profession for women.

1855 § 123. "L'Inévitable."—But the wrath of the British public was not appeased by the sending out of Florence Nightingale; some scapegoat had to be found to bear the blame for the mistakes and disappointments of the campaign. That unenviable rôle fell to Lord Aberdeen. A Radical member of Parliament named Roebuck brought forward a motion for an impartial inquiry into the conduct of the war. The Coalition Government resisted it, for, though they were alive to the mistakes that had been made, they could not allow an independent tribunal to sit in judgment on them while the war was actually going on. It was very doubtful whether this attitude would satisfy the House, but any chance they had of pulling through was destroyed by the action of one of their own number. Lord John Russell had already given the Prime Minister a great deal of trouble; he was inclined to be factious and quarrelsome, and gave the impression that he resented being subordinate to Lord Aberdeen, after having been himself Prime Minister. Whatever his motives, he now suddenly resigned his position without the least warning or consultation with his colleagues, on the ground that he did not feel that the Government could justifiably resist the Roebuck

Motion. This was naturally a shattering blow to whatever degree of confidence the House might still have had in the Ministry. The Motion was passed, and Lord Aberdeen's Government resigned. Disraeli was right: England does not love 1855 coalitions, however able the individual members of them may be.

The Queen now followed the usual constitutional practice by sending for Lord Derby, the leader of the Opposition. Derby was convinced, however, after his experiences the previous year, § 117 that there was not enough administrative ability in the ranks of the Tory party to enable it to carry on the government of the country, especially during a war. He asked the Peelite Gladstone and the Whig Palmerston if they would join him; when they refused he declined the Queen's invitation. This was a bitter disappointment to Disraeli, to whom his action seemed a reckless waste of the opportunity to set the party on its feet once more, by bringing the war to a successful issue with the aid of the experience gained through the mistakes made at the beginning. Victoria now turned to Lord John, still the official leader of the Whigs; but he soon found that he had lost all hold over his party by what was felt to be his unfair and self-seeking treatment of Lord Aberdeen, and none of them would join him.

The terrible possibility which had darkened the consultations of the Queen and her Consort during these critical weeks of political upheaval, now crystallised into a positive certainty. There was no other alternative—they must send for Lord Palmerston. That statesman had foreseen this conjuncture of events for some weeks past; he was, indeed, as he described himself, “ L'Inévitable.” The “ man in the street ” had felt all along that he was the only man who could by his vigour, his buoyant self-confidence, and his whole-hearted support of the war, be safely trusted to pull the country through the crisis.

These expectations were amply fulfilled. Within a few months of Palmerston's becoming Prime Minister the army was well-fed and well-equipped, and less than a year later the war had been won.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Distinguish between the real and the ostensible causes of the Crimean War.
2. How far do you think we are justified in calling the war “ A crime ” ?
3. Explain the parallel between the two “ Peninsular Wars.”
4. How far was the fact that the Government was a coalition the cause of its downfall ?
5. Write a full and detailed commentary on the quotation at the head of the chapter.

## CHAPTER XXI

### “Civis Britannicus” as Prime Minister

“I could not help remarking that there was a serious risk that Lord Palmerston might force himself back into office as Prime Minister, but Lord John thought that Lord Palmerston was too old to do much in the future (having passed his sixty-fifth year).”—THE PRINCE CONSORT, in a Memorandum, 1850.

“I regard the noble Viscount as a man who has experience, but who with experience has not gained wisdom—as a man who has age, but who with age has not the gravity of age, and who, occupying the highest seat of power, has—and I say it with pain—never appeared to be influenced by a due sense of the responsibility that belongs to that exalted position.”—JOHN BRIGHT, in a Speech, 1855.

“An old painted maypole.”—DISRAELI, in a Letter, 1860.

WHEN Lord Palmerston was dismissed from the Foreign Office by Lord John Russell in 1851, Disraeli had grimly remarked, “There *was* a Palmerston.” Perhaps the wish was father to the thought; never was a political prophecy more completely falsified by the event. So far from being a spent force, Palmerston had not then reached the zenith of his popularity and influence by a good deal. An irresistible tidal wave of public opinion swept him up into the position of Prime Minister in the midst of the Crimean War; and from the beginning of 1855 until his death more than ten years later there was only one brief interlude in his rule. Up to this interlude (1858–59) he was his old genially dominating self, now raised to supreme and unquestioned pre-eminence in the State. After it his arrogance was somewhat chastened by experience, and by the presence in his Cabinet of another vigorous personality. In this chapter we shall deal with his bringing of the Crimean War to a comparatively successful close, his temporary fall from power followed by the second Derby-Disraeli Interregnum, and the circumstances which carried him back to the Premiership for the rest of his life.

§ 124. *The Close of the Crimean War.*—During the first half of 1855 the position in the Crimea seemed to be a stalemate, for neither party was strong enough to attack the other. Transport difficulties prevented the Russians from relieving their garrison in Sebastopol, while a lack of cordial understanding between the Allied commanders made it impossible for them to prosecute the war with any vigour.

The tedium of these inactive months was relieved by three outstanding events. The first of these was the arrival of a small but well-equipped force of Piedmontese troops to support the Allies; the second was the death of the Czar Nicholas—as much from a sense of failure and disappointment as from physical causes; and the third was a conference held in Vienna to see if the belligerents could not find some acceptable terms of peace. The new Czar, Alexander II, was ready to agree to all the demands of the Allies save one—that he should undertake to keep no warships in the Black Sea. Palmerston insisted on this, and so the Conference broke down. As a matter of fact, our old friend “Pam” was throwing himself with such zest into the carrying on of the war, and was so confident of his own ability to bring it to a successful issue, that it is doubtful whether he entered upon the negotiations with any very sincere desire to come to terms.

In June an unsuccessful attack was made by the Allies on two Russian redoubts which lay between the trenches and the walls of Sebastopol. The position of the defenders, despite this negative success, was fast becoming desperate, especially after the Allies had destroyed their supply-base at Kertsch. A last sortie was defeated on the Tchernaya, mainly by the Sardinians. Thereafter Sebastopol was doomed. A second attack on the redoubts was carried out by the Allies in September. The French gained their objective, the Malakoff, but the British once more failed to get into the more formidable Redan. There was every indication that a renewed attack, planned for the next day, would be successful; but during the night the Russians evacuated Sebastopol altogether, leaving a mere mass of smoking ruins for the besiegers to take possession of.

§ 125. *The Treaty of Paris.*—Obviously this was not the sort of exploit with which Palmerston would like his war to come to an end, and this feeling was shared by the great majority of his countrymen. Amongst the classes most strongly represented in Parliament, however, the war-spirit seemed to have

burnt itself out. Cobden and Bright had manfully opposed it from the first, despite the contempt which this attitude brought upon them. The Peelites had gone with the stream in the early days of the war, but neither they nor the orthodox Tories were disposed to see it continued indefinitely for the honour and glory of Lord Palmerston.

Indeed, it was now more difficult than ever to see what we were fighting for. Russia had evacuated the Danubian Provinces before hostilities had even commenced, and the new Czar had shown himself ready to meet any reasonable demands the Allies could make. Moreover, after the fall of Sebastopol the question naturally arose: what was to be our next move? Another march on Moscow? The very name of that city was sufficient to dispose Napoleon III to make peace with Russia, even behind Britain's back. He had attained all the objects with which he had gone into the war. Enough had been done for "La Gloire," the slights of Czar Nicholas had been avenged, and the taking of the Malakoff was a fine *coup de théâtre* for the close of his drama. And he now saw an opportunity of gaining as much national and personal prestige by making peace as he had already gained by making war: he would invite all the Powers of Europe to send their representatives to an elaborate Peace Conference in Paris. He saw his capital the scene of international social festivities, and himself the centre of a brilliant diplomatic gathering. Nobody could fail to appreciate the difference between the circumstances now and those of the last Conference in Paris in 1814, and all Frenchmen would realise what the Second Empire had done for their country.

Everything fell out according to his design, but the Peace of Paris was perhaps the most lame and impotent conclusion to a great war that history tells of. Russia surrendered her claim to protect the Balkan Christians, and the Sultan promised to give them equal rights with his Mohammedan subjects—a promise he never even attempted to carry out. The other provisions of the Treaty were little more effective: the neutrality of the Black Sea was in force for barely fifteen years, while the settlement of the question of the Danubian Provinces lasted an even shorter time. Within twenty years the Eastern Question was again disturbing the peace of Europe, as we shall see in a later chapter.

in popular favour as the man who had brought England safely out of the dangers and difficulties in which she had been landed by his predecessors. The House of Commons, however, was still that which had been elected in 1852, and he did not command any very reliable majority in it. Before long, circumstances gave him an opportunity to consolidate his Parliamentary position, of which he availed himself with characteristic dexterity.

In 1840 the British Government had by force of arms compelled the Chinese to cede Hong Kong, to grant trading facilities in five of their other seaports, and to permit British merchants to sell opium in their country. Lord Palmerston had been Foreign Secretary at that time, and had played a prominent part in this not very creditable episode; it was now his good fortune to be able once more to take advantage of the defencelessness of the Chinese. The Governor of Canton had seized the native crew of a Portuguese-built vessel called the *Arrow* on a charge of piracy. The vessel had at one time been registered as British, but this charter had expired, and even by our own Statute Law she could not be considered as a British ship, since her crew were exclusively Chinese. Nevertheless, the officer who represented the trading interests of this country in those parts demanded the release of the prisoners and an apology from Governor Yeh for his “insult” to the Union Jack. Palmerston was in his element. He cordially supported the action of the British agent, a naval squadron was sent to demolish the cardboard forts of Canton (to the great disgust of the officers in command), and the Chinese Government was once more compelled to acknowledge the supremacy of Western civilisation in the arts of killing and maiming human beings.

Fortunately for our national reputation for chivalry and fair play, there were not lacking men in Parliament who deprecated this sort of thing. Derby, John Russell, Cobden, Gladstone, Disraeli—the leaders of all sections of the Opposition—united in attacking the Government. Lord John summed up their point of view when he said: “We have heard too much of late of the prestige of England; we used to hear of the character, of the reputation, of the honour of England.” The Vote of Censure was carried by a majority of sixteen, whereupon Palmerston defiantly dissolved the Parliament, and appealed to the electorate to decide between himself and his opponents. The voters were completely carried away by his rhetoric about “insolent barbarians.”

Several of the most prominent members of the Opposition lost their seats, and the new House contained a clear majority of Palmerstonian "Liberals." Once more had "Pam" demonstrated how complete was his understanding of the national mind, and how firm was his hold on the national heart.

1858 § 127. *An Error of Judgment.*—But pride goes before a fall. The Prime Minister's arrogance was not always acceptable even to members of his own party, and when Disraeli reminded him on one occasion that he was supposed to be a gentleman, the cheers that greeted the jibe were not confined to the ranks of the Opposition. As a matter of fact, Nemesis was close on his heels even at the moment of his electoral triumph, and its form was altogether unexpected.

One evening early in 1858, just as the French Emperor was alighting from his carriage at the Opera in Paris, three bombs were thrown at him. Napoleon himself was uninjured, but eight men were killed by the explosion and several hundreds hurt in the ensuing panic. The culprit proved to be an Italian named Orsini, who took this drastic form of protest against the Emperor's neglect of the cause of the *Risorgimento*. When it transpired that he and his fellow-conspirators had come to England to manufacture their bombs, a violent animosity against "perfidious Albion" arose in France, and this feeling was stimulated by certain politicians who desired to give an anti-English bias to the Imperial foreign policy. A petition was addressed by the army to the Emperor, in which the officers begged to be sent to seek out the assassins, "even in their English lairs"; and the French Ambassador in London pointed out that if the English laws as they stood did not suffice to prevent the manufacture of bombs to kill friendly sovereigns, the sooner those laws were amended the better. This language caused a violent reaction in England, and one would have expected to find Palmerston rampantly maintaining Great Britain's ability to make and amend her own laws without any advice from whiskered foreigners. But the infatuation for Napoleon and all his ways which had led to Pam's downfall in 1851 now led him into a more serious error of judgment. He brought in a "Conspiracy to Murder" Bill, making this crime punishable with penal servitude for life. National pride was stung to the quick at this surrender to the demands and threats of a foreign army. The Bill was thrown out by such a decisive majority that only one course was open to the

Government that had proposed it. Dissolution was out of the question, so soon after the "Canton" election of 1857; the Government resigned, and the Queen sent for Lord Derby.

§ 128. *The Second Tory Interregnum.*—Thus were Derby 1858- and Disraeli once more called upon to undertake the difficult 1859 and thankless task of carrying on an administration with a Parliament elected to support their opponents, and once again it was mainly the rivalry between the two Whig leaders that made the Tory Government possible.

It is interesting to note that Gladstone was invited to join this Cabinet. There did not seem to be any particular reason why he should not have accepted. He was still nominally a Tory, all idea of a revival of the Corn Laws had long since been dropped, and Lord Derby was known to be in favour of some sort of Parliamentary Reform. But there was a sentimental obstacle to any such reunion of the Tory Party: no Peelite would join an administration of which Disraeli was a member. Not even "Dizzy's" magnanimous offer to waive his own claims to be Leader of the House of Commons in Gladstone's favour would suffice to close § 70 the breach opened by his attacks on Peel in 1846.

The new Ministry was not very strong either in talents or experience, but it carried out several useful pieces of work. The most important question which came up for settlement was the reform of Indian administration. The tale of the Great Mutiny, and of the abolition of "John Company" which was its outcome, will be told in the next chapter; for the present it must suffice for us to say that the system devised by Derby and his colleagues gave India peace and prosperity for half a century. In domestic legislation two more milestones were passed on the road to the complete equality of all Britons before the Law. The first of these was the Act which admitted Jews to Parliament, by 1858 allowing any one who wished to do so to omit the specifically Christian words from the oath taken by Members. The second was the abolition of the Property Qualification for Members of Parliament—one of the six points of "The People's Charter" § 72 which only ten years before had seemed so revolutionary.

Then the Government set to work on a Reform Bill. The measure they brought forward could not be described as sweepingly democratic. It did not enfranchise a single working man, 1859 and its most remarkable feature was what Bright ridiculed as "the fancy franchises"—clauses which gave an extra vote to



members of the learned professions and to graduates of the universities. Such a Reform Bill as this could not be expected to arouse much enthusiasm in the country, and as a matter of fact, very little interest was taken in the subject either inside the House or outside it. The time for further Parliamentary Reform was not yet. The Bill was defeated, and Derby dissolved Parliament. The result of the General Election was an increase in the Tory Party of about thirty members. This was not sufficient to give the Government a solid majority, and the slight improvement in their position was more than counterbalanced by a reconciliation between the two Whig leaders. On the eve of the General Election, Palmerston and John Russell had come to an understanding: they would unite to turn the Tories out, and either would serve under the other when the Queen sent for one of them to form a Ministry. The result of this bargain was that the Government was defeated as soon as the new House met, and Lord Derby at once resigned. The Queen was in a difficult position: John Russell was never quite  
 § 123 trusted by the Liberals after his desertion of Lord Aberdeen in the early days of the Crimean War, but the prospect of Palmerston in supreme power for another spell was extremely distasteful to her. She at first hoped that Lord Granville might be able to get both the Whig veterans to serve under him; but Lord John pointed out that this would degrade him to occupying the *third* rank in the Ministry—a position quite unworthy of an ex-Premier. The Queen was therefore compelled to bow to the inevitable, and send for Lord Palmerston once more.

1859-  
 1865 § 129. The Whig-Liberal Triumvirate.—Palmerston had learned a lesson from his discomfiture over the "Conspiracy to Murder" Bill: never again did he make such a mistake. He dropped all support of Napoleon III. Jealousy at the revival of French ambitions to dominate European politics, and fear of some dark design to invade England, had caused a wave of suspicion and hostility to pass over this country; and of this feeling Lord Palmerston now made himself the mouthpiece. Napoleon always declared that nothing was further from his thoughts than any attack on England, and it is difficult to see how any sane man in his position could have entertained so mad a project; but when once the suspicion was aroused in the minds of Englishmen, everything he did or did not do was construed  
 1860 into a fresh cause for alarm and military precaution. A Volunteer

Army was established, coastal fortifications were strengthened, the artillery was armed with new guns. In this policy the Prime Minister had the cordial support of his Foreign Secretary, Lord John; but there was an element in the Cabinet which was altogether opposed to it. This element was personified by Gladstone, who was now for the second time Chancellor of the Exchequer. As guardian of the public purse, Gladstone set himself to scrutinise and question every demand for warlike expenditure. The struggle in the Cabinet was prolonged and bitter. On one occasion the Prime Minister wrote to the Queen: "Viscount Palmerston hopes to be able to overcome his objections, but if this should be impossible, however great the loss to the Government by the retirement of Mr. Gladstone, it would be better to lose Mr. Gladstone than to lose Portsmouth." Gladstone remained, but he always acted as a check on the bellicose exuberance of his Chief.

It was a piece of poetic justice that Gladstone should find himself Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1860, the year in which he had prophesied that the Income Tax would no longer be required. But the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny had thrown out all these optimistic calculations, and as a matter of fact the Tax had to be increased instead of being abolished. One contributory cause for this increase was the Commercial Treaty with France, which was arranged in this very year, by which each country lowered its duties on the other's staple products. The treaty was the result of delicate negotiations carried out by Cobden, who spent a holiday in Paris persuading the Emperor to make the daring experiment, with the ulterior object of allaying the hostility between the two countries through tightening their commercial relationships. Cobden was thus serving both the causes to which he had devoted his life: Free Trade and Peace; indeed, he and Bright always emphasised the connection between the two. On this occasion he acted as a sort of semi-official volunteer, and he would never accept any reward or recognition of his services. The result was undoubtedly beneficial to both countries, but as in Peel's time, the immediate effect of lowering import duties was a necessity for a temporary increase of direct taxes. § 117

We may be surprised to find Gladstone, who had so often been in conflict with Lord Palmerston, now in office under him; but he always said that over none of the critical decisions of his § 76

career had he felt less cause for hesitation than over this. He and the other Peelites had been for thirteen years playing a lone hand outside the two great parties. If ever he was to occupy a useful position in public life he felt that he must join one or the other of them. Much as he distrusted Palmerston personally, he had a good deal in common with his party. On Free Trade, on Parliamentary Reform, and on the support of continental "Liberalism" his views were far more closely allied with theirs than with those of the Tories.

Despite the lack of cordial sympathy between the three statesmen who were its leading figures, this Ministry maintained itself in power for six years. The domestic affairs of those six years will be the subject of a later chapter. We must now turn from these rather petty details of English political life to the more stirring and elemental events that were passing in a far distant part of the globe.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What was the secret of Palmerston's popularity?
2. How far did (a) England, (b) France gain what they sought in the Crimean War?
3. Trace the political history of the "Peelites," who are henceforth absorbed in the Liberal Party.

## CHAPTER XXII

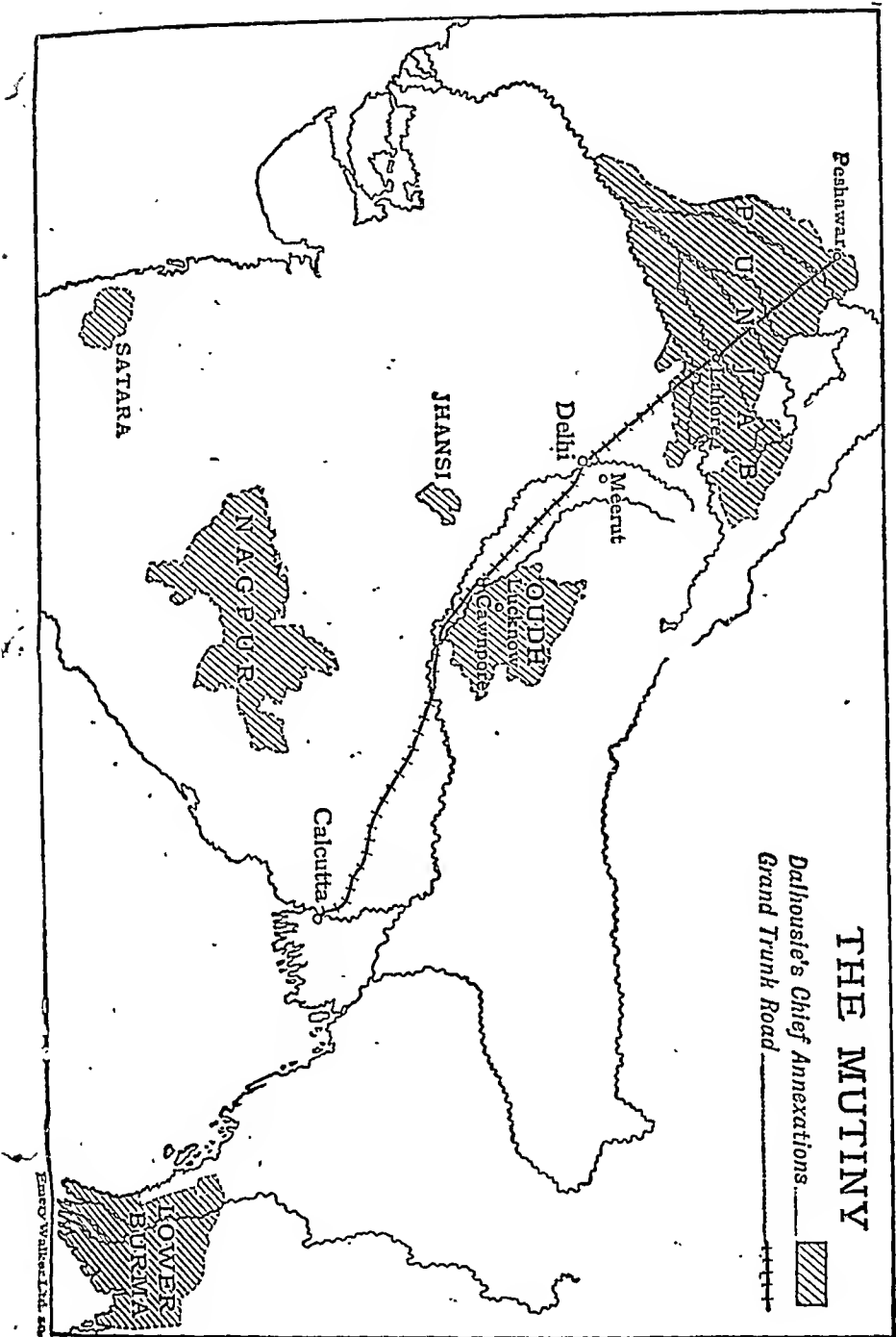
### The Acid-Test for the "Raj"

"The causes and motives of Sedition are innovation in religion, taxes, alteration of laws and customs, breaking of privileges, general oppression, advancement of unworthy persons, strangers, dearths, disbanded soldiers, factions grown desperate, and whatever else in offending people joineth and knitteth them in a common cause.

"And let no prince measure the danger of discontentments by this, whether they be just or unjust (for that were to imagine people to be too reasonable; who do often spurn at their own good), nor yet by this, whether the griefs whereupon they rise be great or small; for they are the more dangerous discontentments where the fear is greater than the feeling. . . . Neither let any prince or State be secure concerning them because they have been often, or have been long, and yet no peril hath ensued."—BACON, *Of Seditions and Troubles*.

THE Indian Mutiny was a particularly striking example of the Briton's traditional habit of blundering into trouble like an ass, and then fighting his way out of it like a lion. The familiar story of the incidents of the rebellion—the *chupattis*, the greased cartridges, the rising at Meerut, the blowing-in of the Kashmir Gate, the struggle on the Ridge at Delhi, the tragedy of Cawnpore, the disarming of the sepoys at Lahore, the Relief of Lucknow, the march of the Highlanders, all this cannot be told in detail here, nor can we do adequate honour to the great names of Outram ("The Bayard of India"), the Lawrences, Havelock (the warrior-evangelist), Montgomery, Nicholson ("The Lion of the Punjab"), "Clemency" Canning, and Colin Campbell. Our present object is limited to trying to discover some of the outstanding lessons which may be learnt from the affair for the future guidance of a ruling race.

§ 130. "The Paramount Power."—We have already seen 1848-  
now Lord Dalhousie annexed the Punjab as a result of the second 1853  
Sikh War, and the Mouths of the Irrawaddy as the result of the § 99  
Second Burmese War; and how "he established the Pax



Britannica from the Indus to Cape Comorin." But it was not only by war that he made territorial acquisitions.

Many states were under the rule of native princes who were "protected" by the British Government; and sometimes these princes oppressed and robbed their subjects in the most scandalous way. In the old days the natural result of misgovernment was a weakening of authority which sooner or later cost the erring prince his throne, and often his life; but British support now made him immune from such dangers, for his subjects were powerless to resist. Moreover, even the best-governed Native States were far less efficiently administered than those which were directly under the Company's rule. A recent and particularly striking instance of this was the Punjab, where the Lawrence § 92 brothers had within a few years worked a change that seemed almost miraculous. Dalhousie's was the energetic clear-headed type of mind which hates inefficiency and slackness. It was intolerable to him that the power of Britain should be used to perpetuate misgovernment. He wished well to the people of India, and the best thing he could do for them seemed to be to bring as many as possible of them under the beneficent régime which he represented. With this object he revived an old doctrine of Indian law by which, when a potentate died without direct descendants, he could leave his personal property to an adopted heir, but his dominions lapsed to the paramount power—formerly the Great Mogul, now the Company. Under this policy, seven states were absorbed within a few years, including almost the whole of the modern "Central Provinces."

But the most important of Dalhousie's acquisitions had nothing to do with "the Doctrine of Lapse"—it was an act of confiscation, pure and simple. The Kingdom of Oudh was a sort of *enclave* in the midst of the Company's territories. Its king was an independent "ally" of the British power. For years he and his *talukdars* or feudal nobles had acted like bandits towards the wretched people; bloodshed and rapine seemed to be his only notion of the functions of a ruler. Again and again he had been urged, warned, threatened, given time-limits within which to improve matters, all to no effect. Towards the end of Dalhousie's term of office it became clear that the scandal could not be allowed to continue any longer. The Governor-General suggested that the king should be required to allow a British "Resident" to re-organise his government; but the Directors

and the Cabinet decided, after their experiences in the Punjab, that the only satisfactory course would be to annex the country outright; and Dalhousie was requested to remain in office long enough to carry out the details of the change. The old king was sent to live, half pensioner, half prisoner, in a palace near Calcutta.

1848 .  
1853

§ 131. "The Blessings of Civilisation."—Good government was not the only blessing which Dalhousie sought to confer on the Indian peoples: he also wished them to participate in all the amenities of civilisation in which the Western World was just then making such progress. His first care was to improve their primitive means of communication. He drew up an elaborate system of railways, and got the construction of them well under way. He had a magnificent trunk road made from Calcutta right up to Peshawar. He introduced the electric telegraph, and within a few years had 6,000 miles of line working. He organised a postal system even cheaper than England's own. He started a Public Works Department, and kept it busy not only on the above-mentioned activities, but upon an irrigation scheme—the first step towards fighting the recurrent famines to which the country was subject. He set on foot agricultural improvements, and provided for the preservation of the forests.

Dalhousie was a good specimen of the high-minded, public-spirited, determined proconsul. He drove himself remorselessly, and so undermined his frail physique that he only survived his Governor-Generalship by a few years of broken health, and died at the age of forty-eight. He represented the confident "cock-sureness" of his age. No doubt ever crossed his mind that what was good for England must be good for India. He was, like so many of the vigorous people who "get things done," deficient in imagination. That Oriental peoples do not like being hustled out of their age-long traditions he hardly realised; and if he had done so, he would merely have been impatient at such ignorant folly. They did not know what was good for them, and he did.

Nevertheless, when he retired in 1856 he had some inkling that there was a dangerous spirit abroad in the land, and his successor, Lord Canning (the son of the famous statesman), was almost immediately involved in the acutest crisis in the history of the Empire—an extremity in which the virility of the British race was put to a crucial test.

§ 132. "Sowing the Wind."—It is impossible to understand the Mutiny without bearing in mind that two distinct types of religious faith prevailed amongst the people. Mohammedanism had come in during what in Europe we call the Later Middle Ages, and had eventually set up an empire which included nearly the whole of India, with its capital at Delhi. Then the decay of this Mogul Empire had allowed the Mahratta princes to regain the ascendancy for the Hindus, who had a great numerical preponderance in the country; and from them the § 95 paramountcy had passed to the British. The old rivalry between Hindu and Mohammedan was one of the foundations upon which the power of the Company was built up, but they were now beginning to sink their differences in a common hatred of the Western civilisation: both alike shared the Oriental dislike of change, and both felt that an insidious attempt was being made to coerce them into adopting the Christian religion.

It was the Hindus in whom the dread of proselytism was most active and most potent. They found a sinister connection between a number of recent occurrences which were really quite distinct in origin. Firstly, the Bengal regiments in the Company's service, which (unlike those recruited in Bombay and Madras) consisted mainly of high-caste Brahmins, had been exempted from service overseas, lest they should lose caste and be degraded in the eyes of their co-religionists. This restriction had been found extremely inconvenient at the time of the Burmese War, and the announcement was made that it would henceforth be withdrawn. Secondly, new prison regulations prevented prisoners from cooking their own food, which might, therefore, be polluted by being prepared by persons of lower caste—perhaps even by "untouchables" whose approach within sixty yards contaminated a really high-caste Hindu. Thirdly, an optimistic missionary manifesto had recently been issued, pointing out the splendid facilities that would be afforded by the new railway system in the work of converting India. Fourthly, a law was passed under Dalhousie's régime to permit the remarriage of widows—an appalling sacrilege to the pious Hindu. In all this the natives saw signs of a deep-laid plot to obliterate the caste distinctions with which their religion was inextricably bound up.

Then there was another aspect of the situation which appealed more particularly to the Mohammedan princes, ever watchful for an opportunity to reassert their lost supremacy. The prestige



of Britain depended upon the idea of her invincible prowess in war; but this had been rudely shaken by the Afghan and Crimean Wars. Moreover, two regiments of British troops had been withdrawn to go to the Crimea, and had never been replaced, while four more regiments had lately been sent to Persia. The proportion of white to native troops was now only one to seven. Surely the appointed hour was at hand! And were there not prophecies that the domination of the Feringhees was to last a hundred years from the Battle of Plassey?

Again, there were three native princes who were just at the moment smarting under an acute sense of grievance. The King of Oudh had been dethroned, and his nobles deprived of their prescriptive right to pillage; the Great Mogul had been given notice that even the empty show of royalty which he enjoyed would be discontinued; and when the old ex-Peishwa died in 1853, his adopted son, afterwards known to infamy as "The Nana Sahib," was allowed to succeed to his private fortune, but not to the pension which had been paid to his foster-father under the treaty of 1818.

§ 95

§ 133. "Reaping the Whirlwind."—Fear, suspicion, anger, hatred, ambition, and contempt all contributed to charge the air with electricity at the beginning of 1856. Then the authorities, by a piece of sheer stupidity, blindly precipitated the bursting of the storm—fortunately before any elaborate plot had time to mature.

In 1856 the old type of musket nicknamed "Brown Bess"—which had been used since the days of Wellington—was discarded in favour of the Lee-Enfield rifle. For this the ends of the cartridges, which were covered with an evil-smelling grease, had to be bitten off before they were used. The rumour got about that the grease used was a compound of the fat of cows (which were sacred to the Hindus) and of hogs (which were unclean to the Mussulmans). There were murmurings which quickly grew into a panic and almost open mutiny. The English officers assured the sepoys that they were misinformed. They were undoubtedly sincere in this statement, but the fact remained that the story was true, that the sepoys knew that it was true, and that the denial intensified tenfold their fear, suspicion, and contempt. It confirmed the impression of a design to undermine the foundations of their faith.

Ominous signs of the coming storm were disregarded. The

senior officers in the Company's service were mostly too old for their posts. Brigadiers of seventy and colonels of sixty could not be expected to cope with the crisis that was fast approaching. In May, 1857, matters came to a head. Eighty men of a native regiment stationed at Meerut refused to go through their musketry exercises with the tainted cartridges. They were sentenced by court martial to various terms of penal servitude on the roads; and were then placed under a guard of their late comrades-in-arms—who regarded them as martyrs for the faith. That same night the prisoners were released, and having slaughtered such of their officers as they could get at, the whole regiment rushed off to Delhi. The garrison of that city received them with open arms, the old Mogul was brought forth and informed that he was sovereign of all the Indies, pandemonium reigned throughout the city, and all the whites were killed—but one heroic telegraphist had just time to send warning to Lahore, the capital of the Punjab. There the British authorities promptly disarmed the native regiments before they even knew of the mutiny.

At Cawnpore, an important military station in the Doab, there were a considerable number of white folk, for besides three hundred European soldiers there were many men engaged in railway construction, with their wives and families. These were all besieged in a tumble-down old fortress, by a large number of mutineers. Sir Hugh Wheeler, the veteran commander of the garrison, sent for the Nana Sahib, who had always professed the most cordial feelings towards British rule, to come to his aid. The Nana came, but to join the besiegers. The defence of Cawnpore was one of the most splendid pieces of courage and endurance in the annals of Britain, or of any other country. After three weeks of almost continuous fighting, the handful of survivors (mostly civilians) were still holding out against thousands of trained soldiers, well-armed, and maddened by religious frenzy. Then Wheeler surrendered on a promise that the party should be allowed to evacuate the place freely; and every man, woman, and child was treacherously slaughtered in cold blood.

At Lucknow, the capital of the recently annexed province of Oudh, there was also a very formidable rising, fomented by the dispossessed *talukdars*. The garrison—not wholly British, for many of the sepoys remained true to their salt—were besieged in the Residency; and Sir Henry Lawrence, who was engaged

there on duties similar to those in which he had been so successful in the Punjab, was killed.

That was the general situation at the end of June ; but then the tide began to turn.

1857 § 134. The Suppression.—Lord Canning was called upon to shoulder the responsibility of dealing with this crisis within six months of his first arrival in India. He had never done anything remarkable in his life up to now, but he was one of those men whose ability and force of character are never suspected by others—nor even perhaps by themselves—until they are put to the test. Of him it might be said that he rose to the occasion—and saved it. Realising to the full the gravity of the position, he was always calm, level-headed and determined ; never downcast, never bloodthirsty, when many of those around him alternated between ferocity and despair. By his prompt action the area of the disturbances was practically limited to the Ganges valley. He had one piece of good luck, in that the troops which had been sent to the Persian Gulf had made short work of the enemy opposed to them, and could be hurried back to India ; while men, horses, and money were sent from South Africa by Sir § 126 George Grey, and the troops that were on their way to prosecute Palmerston's Chinese War were diverted to India to undertake a task that was worthier of them. By the beginning of July he was able to send Sir Henry Havelock to the centre of the mutiny with 1,500 men. Havelock, after a series of desperate engagements, occupied Cawnpore. He then went to try to raise the siege of Lucknow, but was driven back and returned to Cawnpore to await reinforcements. A little later Sir Charles Outram, who had commanded the army recently engaged in Persia, arrived with 2,500 more men. The combined forces succeeded in getting into Lucknow, but could not get out again.

All this time a little body of less than 4,000 men, partly European and partly sepoy, and mostly drawn from the Punjab, was engaged in trying to take Delhi, a city covering  $3\frac{1}{2}$  square miles, defended by high walls and a garrison of 20,000 well-armed mutineers, with a hostile population all around them. Sir John Nicholson, second-in-command of the besiegers, "bullied" his commander into attacking the place in force. The gate having been blown up by a signal act of heroism, the assault was made on September 14th, and was completely successful, though Nicholson himself was killed in the street fighting which followed.

Meanwhile, the news of the outbreak reached London, and struck everybody from the Queen downwards with horror and consternation. The truth about such terrible deeds as the Cawnpore massacre was bad enough, but it was greatly exaggerated in the telling; and frenzied demands for immediate and blood-curdling deeds of vengeance were made on all hands. One man who refused to go with the stream was Disraeli. He laid the blame for the outbreak partly (with some truth) on the recent policy of annexation, and partly (with no truth at all) on a general attempt to proselytise the Hindus. He was particularly contemptuous of the outcry for vengeance: why should we sink to the level of the Nana Sahib?

Twenty thousand men were sent out under Sir Colin Campbell—one of the very few senior officers who came out of the Crimean War with their military reputations intact. He arrived on August 14th, but November was well advanced before his force was in a fit state for the campaign. Then it proceeded to do its work most efficiently. Cawnpore was retaken (it had fallen into the hands of the mutineers again); Lucknow was relieved and its heroic garrison withdrawn, though Havelock died soon afterwards of exposure and strain (he was over sixty years of age). Campbell then went on to drive off the rebels who were hemming in the forces in Delhi. The back of the Mutiny was now broken, though a whole year of "clearing up" was required before Lord Clyde, as he now became, could announce that it was all over.

§ 135. Some General Considerations.—Let us now consider some of the broad and general features of the affair.

Firstly, what *was* the Mutiny? It was a military rising, fomented for reasons of their own by several of the native princes, while the peasants were for the most part mere spectators. It was not a national revolution, for there was no nation to make one.

Secondly, how did the British people show up under the ordeal? Canning upheld the finest traditions of his post: firm and courageous while the danger lasted, merciful and forbearing when it was past. Officers like Lawrence and Nicholson and Havelock displayed military virtues of the highest type, though some others were found wanting in the crisis, and were with difficulty restrained from vindictive and indiscriminate reprisals. Many junior officers made splendid reputations for courage and enterprise, and the men in the ranks performed marvellous feats

both of marching and of fighting. The civilians, both men and women, suffered extremities of privation and danger with heroic fortitude. As to the public at home, the clamour for vengeance was perhaps natural, but it was not very dignified: Canning was ridiculed and abused for his "clemency" as if that quality were wicked and shameful. He had a steadfast supporter in the Queen, however.

Thirdly, what were its results? The most important was that the queer old anomaly of a great dominion being ruled by a combination of the Queen's Government and the directors of a Company came to an end. That it had lasted so long was due to our characteristic British way of modifying existing institutions to "make them do" when circumstances change. The shock of the Mutiny now made John Bull wake up to the dangers of the system: for instance, the sailing of Sir Colin Campbell's army had been delayed for several weeks by the double quantity of red tape that had to be unravelled. Palmerston's Bill to re-model the Indian Government was rejected, and before he could frame  
 § 127 another he was bundled out of office over another matter altogether. It was his successor, Lord Derby, who put through the Act by which India was henceforth administered. The Government of India was to be in the hands of a Secretary of State in the Cabinet, assisted by a paid Council, nominated by himself, of former residents in India; and the representative of the Crown in India was to be styled Viceroy instead of Governor-General.

Fourthly, what lessons did we learn from it? Chiefly, to be more careful about the religious susceptibilities of the natives, and to avoid giving them the slightest cause to suspect a policy of proselytism. Also, never to let the proportion of European troops to sepoy drop below the level of one-fourth, though this arrangement could not be made effective until the army was reformed in 1871.

§ 177 Lastly, why was it unsuccessful? Because, as always, the Indians were divided against themselves. Many, even of the Bengal regiments, were faithful to their officers; the newly enrolled Sikh troops were eager to strike at their hereditary foes the Mussulmans of Delhi; the Gurkhas of Nepaul were always spoiling for a fight, and felt a warmer comradeship for the Scottish Highlanders than for the Bengalis of the plains. Moreover, most of the native princes were well aware of the advantages

of the British supremacy. What would have been the result to them, and to the Indian peoples in general, if the Mutiny had been successful ?

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What peculiarly British characteristics can you discern in the story of the Mutiny ?
2. Trace the effects of Dalhousie's policy (*a*) in the origin ; (*b*) in the suppression of the Mutiny.
3. Was Dalhousie justified in introducing a civilisation that was distasteful to the natives ?
4. Write a justification of the Mutiny from an Indian point of view.

## CHAPTER XXIII

### England and the "Risorgimento"

We who have seen Italia in the throes  
Half risen but to be hurled to the ground, and now,  
Like a ripe field of wheat where once drove plough,  
All bounteous as she is fair, we think of those

Who blew the breath of life into her frame :  
Cavour, Mazzini, Garibaldi : Three :  
Her Brain, her Soul, her Sword ; and set her free  
From ruinous discords, with one lustrous aim. . . .

GEORGE MEREDITH.

§ 33 In the earlier chapters of this book we have seen how the French Revolution and its Napoleonic sequel aroused great impulses in the peoples of Europe towards Liberty and Nationality, how Kings and Emperors tried to smother these impulses, how they smouldered beneath the surface and burst into flame from time to time in various parts of the Continent. What the continental  
§ 100- "liberals" aimed at was, firstly, that people of one race and  
103 speech, who had been arbitrarily placed under several autocratic rulers in 1815, should be joined together in one political unit ; and secondly, that countries should be governed by some form of elective Parliament. England regarded herself as the home both of "Nationality" and of "Liberty," and during the critical years of the century from Canning to Gladstone, her sympathies were always on the side of "peoples rightly struggling to be free." In 1848 there had been simultaneous outbursts of revolutionary passion in half the countries of Europe, but these had all collapsed during the following year or two ; the chief cause of the failure being the lack of political experience in the leading "liberals" themselves.

We shall now see how one of these great movements was eventually brought to a successful issue by the wisdom of a great statesman, by the leadership of a warrior-hero, and by the devotion of

thousands of brave men to the cause of their country's liberty and unity; and we shall see with pride how our own country helped to bring about a happy ending to this stirring and romantic episode in European history.

§ 136. "Napoleon le Petit."—The foundation of the Kingdom of Italy was a drama in two acts with an epilogue. In the first act one of the leading parts was played by Louis Napoleon, Emperor of the French; and in order to understand the plot of the play we must first grasp the circumstances in which this remarkable man found himself, and the objects at which he aimed.

When he had been a candidate for the Presidency of the Second Republic in 1848, he had claimed to be the heir to his uncle's § 101 traditions and policy as well as to the glamour of his name; and when, two years later, he overturned the constitution and established the Second Empire, he had courted popular favour by reiterating his promises to govern according to "les idées § 116 napoleoniennes." But he soon found that these maxims involved him in the most baffling cross-currents of policy.

Firstly, he had promised an orderly and efficient government in place of the slackness that had prevailed during the regime of Louis Philippe; but he could only attain this by organising an autocratic administration flatly contradictory of the democratic ideals of "La Révolution" which he, like his uncle, always claimed that he was fulfilling, and which was still very dear to the hearts of millions of Frenchmen.

Secondly, he had undertaken to put France once more in a dominant position amongst European States, and thus to satisfy that desire for "glory" which is so deeply engrained in the French national character. But the situation in Europe had greatly changed since the beginning of the century: great rival Powers had grown up with claims and ambitions of their own, and with immense standing armies with which to maintain them. The problem for Napoleon III was how to satisfy this taste for national pre-eminence without involving the country in ruinously expensive wars; and this could only be done by a deep-laid and adroitly executed foreign policy.

Thirdly, he claimed to be the apostle of the revolutionary doctrine of Nationalism. But if he supported the unity of Germany he would strengthen a Power which already threatened to become a dangerous rival to France in the near future; while if



he supported the unification of Italy it would be almost impossible for him to avoid coming into conflict with the Pope, whose temporal possessions divided the northern and southern halves of the peninsula, and a quarrel with the Pope would involve him in violent opposition from that very influential section of French society (especially strong in the army) which supported the Catholic Church.

The task of reconciling these contradictory elements in his "programme" was altogether beyond the mediocre talents of the Emperor. For a time he seemed to be successful, and his Crimean War did much to strengthen the Imperial regime; but in the end his attempts to extricate himself from his ever-growing difficulties brought ruin on himself, on his Empire, and on France.

1810-1861 § 137. Cavour and the Pact of Plombières.—In 1852 Victor Emmanuel II, King of Sardinia, took a step fraught with momentous consequences for Italy; he appointed as his chief minister Count Camillo Cavour. At that moment Italy was still divided into half a dozen separate states. Of these, Naples was ruled by the Bourbon Ferdinand II, nicknamed "King Bomba" from his having bombarded his own Sicilian subjects during the abortive rising of 1848-49; a wide band of territory across the middle of the peninsula was subject to the Pope and his cardinals; and Lombardy and Venetia formed part of the hereditary domains of the Emperor of Austria. These four states between them displayed every variety of misgovernment: paralysing inefficiency, shameless corruption, and vindictive cruelty—"the negation of God erected into a form of government" as Gladstone wrote in 1853. Merely to be known as a thinking man was to be suspected and watched by the authorities; the conversation at every table was hushed by the terror of priests and spies and foreign soldiers; political prisoners were shut up for years in filthy dungeons, chained hand and foot to the most degraded felons; for criticism of authority women were publicly flogged and men were secretly shot.

As our chapter-heading suggests, Cavour's was the brain which planned the means by which this blot on nineteenth-century civilisation was brought to an end. To see Italy united and free was the object of his life. For this end he knew how to play on the weaknesses as well as the virtues of his fellow-men, but if his methods sometimes descended to trickery, he would doubtless

have claimed that here, if ever, the end justified the means. He early formed the opinion that there was no hope for Italy in Republicanism: the events of 1848-49 had proved that. Mazzini § 103 and his friends of the Roman Republic were devoted patriots and lofty idealists, but level-headed political sagacity was lacking in them, and Italy could never be bound together by such an abstract idea as that of the Republic. Cavour saw that the only practical scheme was to extend the existing constitutional monarchy of Piedmont-Sardinia, until it included all the rest of the country. He drew another lesson from the earlier failure: that in order to expel the powerful Austrian tyranny from the peninsula (which must be the first step in the unification), he must have the help of a foreign ally.

It was with this in view that Sardinian troops were sent to § 124 support the French and British armies in the Crimea in 1855. Cavour thus gained the right to attend the Peace Conference that followed the war, and had an opportunity of gaining the private ear of Napoleon. To think of employing on behalf of Italian § 125 Independence the same bayonets which had in 1849 destroyed the last hopes of the Roman Republic was a bold stroke of political imagination; but the French Emperor was already on bad terms with Austria on account of her vacillating policy during the late war, and he fully realised what a striking justification of the Imperial regime it would be if he could revive the Napoleonic control over the destinies of Italy, and at the same time humiliate the State which was still France's greatest rival for the hegemony of Europe. The murderous attempt of Orsini to wreak vengeance § 127 on him for his desertion of the cause of Italian liberty appeared for the moment as if it would shatter Cavour's scheme, but in the event it had the contrary effect. Napoleon took the reproaches and exhortations of Orsini so much to heart (though he did not relieve him from the guillotine) that he forthwith made a secret agreement with Sardinia. By the Pact of Plom- 1858 bières France was to make war on Austria in conjunction with Sardinia. When the war had been won, Victor Emmanuel was to add Lombardy and Venetia to his dominions, and to cede Savoy and Nice to Napoleon as the price of his assistance. Cavour well knew that the Emperor would never consent either to the erection of a powerful monarchy in Italy or to any attack on the domains of the Pope, but he managed to throw dust in the eyes of his new ally as to his ultimate designs.

1859 § 138. Solferino and Villafranca.—As soon as the Pact was signed Cavour hastened to provoke Austria to immediate war, before the unstable Emperor should have time to change his mind. He “inspired” attacks on the Austrian Government in the Piedmontese newspapers, he imposed heavy import duties on Austrian goods, he mobilised the army on the Austrian frontiers. His aim was to get Austria to send an ultimatum in the first week in May, and he proved to be less than a week out in his calculations. The French Emperor fulfilled his contract, and up to a certain point the whole scheme went according to plan. Brilliant victories were won at Magenta and Solferino (June, 1859), but then Napoleon’s nerve began to give way. He had had little or no experience of the grim realities of war, and the sights and sounds of Solferino appalled him. Moreover, the peoples of other Italian states, inspired by the glorious doings in Piedmont, rose in rebellion against their own despots—a development that Napoleon never bargained for; while Prussia began to make a threatening movement of her troops towards the Rhine, as if she contemplated taking advantage of France’s pre-occupation. The Emperor therefore hastened to come to terms with the enemy without consulting his allies. By the Peace of Villafranca, Austria ceded Lombardy to Piedmont, but retained Venetia.

Thus Napoleon had gained some of the “glory” he was seeking, for his armies had won a striking success on the same scene and against the same enemy as his uncle had fought some of his most brilliant campaigns; and he had also added two provinces to the territories of France. The sacrifice of Savoy and Nice was a bitter blow to the Italian patriots, but these little provinces had always been more French than Italian in language and traditions. Cavour was beside himself with rage and mortification at the premature peace, but his master was more philosophical. Victor Emmanuel realised that the acquisition of Lombardy was a great step towards his objective, and he foresaw that further opportunities for expansion would soon arise, when the other peoples of the peninsula rebelled against their foreign rulers. Thus the drama of the Risorgimento was suspended for the time.

1860 § 139. Garibaldi and “The Thousand.”—But the second  
1807- act commenced only a few months later, and in this the most  
1882 outstanding figure was Giuseppe Garibaldi. He had returned

to America after the tragic end of the adventure of 1848. He earned his living at various humble employments, and for a time he followed his old calling as a sailor ; but he and his friends were all the time watching and waiting for another opportunity to strike a blow for their native land. They took part in the Franco-Austrian War as irregular troops, but there was little cordiality between Cavour and Garibaldi, for the latter was still a republican at heart. It was only by degrees that he became reconciled to his Italy becoming a Kingdom instead of a Republic, while some of the most fervid patriots, including Mazzini himself, could never give active support to a monarchist movement.

After the Peace of Villafranca, Garibaldi retired to a rocky islet near Sardinia, and lived the simple life of a peasant-farmer until the time should again be ripe for action. Early in 1860 the Sicilians rose in revolt against the King of Naples, and they besought Garibaldi to come to their aid. He crossed once more to Piedmont and organised a band of volunteers armed and equipped by subscriptions amongst well-wishers to the cause. Of course, Victor Emmanuel and his Minister could not openly support the enterprise, for they were at peace with Naples ; but they turned a blind eye on the preparations, and the little band of " red-shirts " set out from Genoa in June. Garibaldi was the greatest guerilla commander that ever lived. Regular warfare offered little scope for his unique gifts of resource, enterprise and personal magnetism ; but this Sicilian expedition was an ideal field for them. The exploits of " The Thousand " are a romantic and thrilling chapter in the history of warfare. They utterly defeated the elaborately trained Neapolitan army, and in the course of a few short weeks they swept the whole island clear of all traces of Bourbon power. Then, with swelling ranks and flushed with their success, they crossed to the mainland. Thousands of men deserted from the Royal army to join them, the people welcomed them with enthusiasm, and the new King Francis was driven into exile. Garibaldi found that the people desired that their country should be annexed by Victor Emmanuel, and form part of a Kingdom of Italy. He therefore accepted a Dictatorship until this could be brought about.

Meanwhile, Cavour was watching his successes with some anxiety. The Romagnuol subjects of the Pope were also in revolt against the clerical tyranny : if it were left to Garibaldi to come to their aid, his prestige would far eclipse that of the King himself,

and would give him a preponderating voice in the constitution about to be set up. The Sardinian Minister therefore took the bold step of declaring war on the Pope himself. He knew that he was running a grave risk of bringing either Austria or France into the field as protectors of the Holy See, but there were several factors in his favour. One of the most important of these was the attitude of Great Britain.

1860 § 140. Lord John Russell's "Non-Intervention."—Talleyrand once said that "non-intervention" was a diplomatic word which might mean much the same thing as "intervention," and England's negative support of the Risorgimento was a striking proof of the truth of this paradox.

§ 128 The Conservatives had little sympathy with the movement, and Italian patriots were delighted to hear of the fall of the Derby-Disraeli Administration in 1859. It was mainly Lord John Russell's interest in Italy that made him choose the Foreign Office as his department when Lord Palmerston formed his 1859 "Triumvirate Ministry;" and it was the one subject upon which that Ministry was cordially united. The Queen did not at all sympathise with their views, for she could never quite free herself from the anachronistic idea that the territory ruled by a prince was his private property. The inhabitants of Italy were in her eyes like tenants on the estates of their sovereigns: to encourage them in resisting the regulations of their landlords was unneighbourly, to say the least of it. However, she found it impossible to resist a united Cabinet, especially when it was backed up by the sentiments of the nation at large.

1853 Gladstone had already done much to create a public opinion in Europe favourable to the Risorgimento, by his scathing exposure of the horrors he had seen in the Neapolitan prisons; but, as we have already remarked, the action taken by the new British Government was mainly negative. Nevertheless, its effect was decisive. Firstly, when Garibaldi and his Thousand were sailing to overturn the Government of Sicily and Naples, the squadron of British ships which was stationed in those waters should by international law have prevented this party of rebels from landing on the coasts of a "friendly" sovereign; but the commander was ordered to exercise a benevolent neutrality towards the expedition. Secondly, when Cavour launched his attack on the Papal States, and there was every prospect that the Powers of Europe might come to the aid of sovereigns in

distress, Lord John intervened with a despatch which effectually prevented them from taking any such step. He quoted from Vattel, the leading authority on International Law, to the effect that "When a people from good reasons takes up arms against an oppressor, it is but an act of justice and generosity to assist brave men in the defence of their liberties." As to whether these Italian rebels had good reasons, "Her Majesty's Government hold that the people in question are themselves the best judges of their own affairs . . . and they turn their eyes to the gratifying prospect of a people building up the edifice of their liberties amid the sympathies and good wishes of Europe." Whatever we may think of this as a piece of logical reasoning, the tone of the despatch left no doubt as to the attitude of England. The European potentates were both astonished and angry, but they hesitated to intervene, and the critical moment passed. Odo Russell, a hard-headed diplomatist of the old school, wrote to Lord John: "My dear Uncle, ever since your famous despatch of the 27th you are blessed night and morning by twenty millions of Italians. The moment it was published in Italian, thousands of people copied it from each other to carry it into their homes and weep over it for joy and gratitude in the bosoms of their families, away from brutal mercenaries and greasy priests."

§ 141. "Viva Verdi."<sup>1</sup>—The rest of the story is soon told. 1860-1861 Russell's despatch served to "keep the ring" free from interruption while the Italian Liberals were smashing the reactionary powers which had paralysed them for so many centuries. The Papal forces crumbled away before the Sardinians. Garibaldi met Victor Emmanuel, and having handed over to him the kingdom he had won for him, retired once more to Caprera, in the Mediterranean. "Italy," was no longer a mere geographical expression, but the name of a homogeneous state with a constitutional government. The only exceptions to the unity of the whole peninsula were Venetia, still in the hands of the Emperor of Austria, and Rome. The first of these was added to the kingdom when Austria was defeated by Prussia, some five or six years later; and Rome became the capital of Italy in 1870. For the next ten years the temporal power of the Pope in the "Holy City" was upheld by a French army of

<sup>1</sup> This was one of the watchwords of the "Liberals" during the revolution, the secret understanding amongst them being that the letters of the famous composer's name stood for "Victor Emmanuele Re D'Italia."

occupation. Napoleon sought by this means to conciliate the Catholic Party in France; and Victor Emmanuel had the good sense to see that he would only have to wait for the inevitable collapse of the Second Empire, and the ripe fruit would fall into his mouth. This was just what happened. The French garrison had to be withdrawn to defend Paris against the Prussians, and the King took possession of his new capital without a blow.

Garibaldi paid a short visit to England in 1864, and at once became the idol of the nation. His majestic presence and his noble simplicity of dress and demeanour won all hearts. He was not accustomed to late hours and festivities, however, and his stay had to be cut short lest his health should break down under the strain.

British action in the movement had not cost the life of a single soldier or sailor, nor had it involved a penny of expenditure, and yet the Italian patriots could not fail to contrast England's disinterested support of their cause with that of the French Emperor, who had pocketed Savoy and Nice as the price of his intervention in 1859, and had then done his best to hinder the development which took place the following year. When John Russell went to Italy on holiday some years later with his family, he found in his sitting-room (which had not been specially prepared for him) the portraits of the four national heroes of the Risorgimento: Victor Emmanuel, Cavour, Garibaldi, and—Lord John Russell!

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain the part played by the two Napoleons in the Risorgimento.
2. Why did the movement of 1859-60 succeed where that of 1848-49 had failed?
3. Explain in one sentence each the share of the following in the movement: (a) Victor Emmanuel; (b) Garibaldi; (c) Cavour; (d) Gladstone; (e) John Russell.

## CHAPTER XXIV

### The Re-Birth of a Nation

"In a larger sense we cannot dedicate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have consecrated it far above our power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it will never forget what they did here. It is for us here to be dedicated to the great task remaining before us,—that from these honoured dead we may take increased devotion to the cause for which they here gave the last measure of devotion,—that we here highly resolve that the dead shall not have died in vain, that the nation shall, under God, have a new birth of freedom; and that the government of the people, by the people and for the people shall not perish from the earth."—ABRAHAM LINCOLN, Address at Gettysburg Cemetery, 1862.

WE must now make a short digression to events which were taking place many thousands of miles away from our shores, but which were nevertheless of the greatest significance for us and for all the peoples of Europe. The War of Secession raised a number of questions which vitally concern nearly every modern State. Can a Democracy be based on servile labour? Can a State leave unsettled for an indefinite length of time questions vital to its social life? Is it possible for a democratic form of government to retain its integrity under the severest strain that can be imposed upon it—that of civil war? What are the social and economic conditions of success in modern warfare?

Not only did the civilised world see these problems discussed, if not altogether settled, by the most forcible of arguments in America; it also saw in action there the most perfect model of a democratic statesman that any nation has thrown up in her hour of need. If for no other reason, an acquaintance with the personality of Abraham Lincoln will always make the study of this period of American history almost necessary to Englishmen.

**§ 142. The Constitution Builders.**—The thirteen colonies 1783- which cut themselves adrift from their Mother Country by the 1789 Declaration of Independence were united in doing this, but they 1776



were united in very little else. Their climate varied from that of the North of Scotland to that of the South of Spain, and there were similar contrasts in their social and economic traditions. The common danger had drawn them together during the war, but as soon as peace was signed in 1783, the confederation had dissolved into its elements. The experience of the next few years, however, proved that this division would be a fatal handicap to their future development. Provision for defence, for instance, would be far more effective and economical if undertaken collectively; and for each State to pursue its own narrow trade policy would lead to a ruinous chaos. Again, was each State to maintain its own ambassadors at the Courts of Europe? Was each to confine its postal arrangements to its own borders?

A certain number of far-sighted Americans had always wanted to see the citizens of all the different States bind themselves together into one great and powerful nation; but the impulse towards union was so feeble that it was not until 1788 that a more or less representative body of delegates met at Philadelphia to decide upon some sort of federal constitution. Then began a momentous struggle as to the form of the proposed union. Should it consist of a number of sovereign independent States acting jointly in certain definite matters, or should it form one united nation, with limited powers left to the local government of the States? And as a corollary of this, there was another problem. Should there be a powerful central Executive, presided over by some sort of elected Monarch, or should the Union consist merely of a sort of "League of Nations"? The protagonists of these conflicting policies were Thomas Jefferson, who represented the States Rights ideal, and Alexander Hamilton, who represented the United Nation ideal. The one party said: Have we destroyed one tyranny only to submit to another? Let us be *free*. The other said: Are we to crumble into anarchy? Let us be *strong*. In the end a compromise was agreed to. The States were to maintain their independence except in such matters as Defence, Commercial Policy, Foreign Affairs, and the Post Office; but, on the other hand, the Federal Government was to be truly national, and the head of it was to wield enormous power, especially in times of emergency.

There were two features of the constitution which foreshadowed troubles to come. Firstly, the States which were most jealous for their independence were all in one part of the country—the

South. Secondly, while the Constitution differentiated between "free persons" and "persons held to labour," it never mentioned slavery as an institution; and this discreet silence covered a corresponding geographical division of opinion and interest, for the farming and industrial North had no use for slave labour, while the crops of the South were dependent on it. But the Constitution makers felt that the great thing for the moment was to bring the Union into being. Such thorny problems as these might be left for future generations to settle.

§ 143. North is North and South is South.—Everybody 1804-1850 hoped in a vague sort of way that the country would sooner or later outgrow the necessity for what was admittedly an evil, but subsequent developments were all in the direction of increasing the economic importance of slavery. The invention of the "gin" enabled much larger quantities of cotton to be prepared for export, and the Industrial Revolution in Britain afforded a rapidly expanding market for it. The cotton-growing "interest" grew in importance and wealth, and the area it cultivated expanded. Slavery had been forbidden by all the Northern State Governments; but when the Federal Government purchased Louisiana, including almost the whole of the Mississippi valley, from Napoleon in 1804, so that there was a prospect of half a dozen new States being added to the Union, the question naturally arose: Were they to be Slave or Free? The difficulty was once more laid to rest by the "Missouri Compromise." All States to 1820 the north of the latitude 36.30 were to be free, while those to the south of that line could have slaves.

But the cleavage between North and South was only the more clearly defined by this arrangement; and ten years later it was further deepened, when South Carolina raised the old issue as to the limits of the Federal Government's control over individual States. A tariff of import duties had been imposed by the 1828 Federal Legislature; but the Southern States had no industries to protect: they lived by exporting cotton and importing manufactures in exchange for it. South Carolina therefore claimed the right to "nullify" the tariff, so far as her own ports were concerned. President Andrew Jackson refused to admit this claim, however, and took drastic steps to enforce the Federal laws. The ultimate result was another compromise: the duties were lowered, and South Carolina withdrew her "Nullification." Once more the crisis was postponed.

1835- In the course of the next fifteen years new developments  
 1850 aggravated the situation. A network of railways greatly stimulated the Northern industries, while the South remained stationary in the old way of life. During the later 'forties great numbers of  
 § 78 immigrants flocked to America owing to the Irish Famine and the abortive revolutions on the continent of Europe. These immigrants all went to the Northern States, for a new-comer had a much better chance of making his own way there than in the South, where negro slavery made all labour seem unworthy of the white race, and where the traditions of social caste were in full force.

Now it was mainly Southerners who had built up the Constitution, for slave labour promotes the existence of a leisured class who can devote themselves to the arts and sciences—including those of government; eight of the first ten presidents had been men from the Southern States. But these Southerners now began to feel that an irresistible force was ousting them from their traditional leadership, and that they were in imminent danger of finding themselves under the heel of "Yankees" whose political ideals and social system were utterly alien to their own. By the Constitution, members of the Lower House in the Federal Congress were allotted to the States in proportion to their population, while in the Senate each State was represented by two members, irrespective of its size. Owing to the recent immigration, the North had now gained a permanent majority in "The House," and this made the South all the more determined to maintain at least an even balance in the Senate, so that it should be in a position to resist legislation which might injure its prosperity—perhaps attack the very basis of its economic existence.

1850- § 144. Secession.—To soothe the perturbed Southerners  
 1861 Congress passed a Fugitive Slave Law in 1850, to give owners greater powers to recapture their slaves who had sought refuge in the Free States. The result of this was to embitter the quarrel, for some of the cruellest aspects of slavery were now brought before the very eyes of the inhabitants of the Northern States. The agitation for Abolition thus got a great impetus, and it was further stimulated by the publication of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* in 1852. Southerners were indignant at the unjust suggestion that they were all brutal taskmasters battenning on a system that was a crime against God and man; and their alarm at the prospect of the North gaining a monopoly of political power grew apace.

As a matter of fact, the extreme abolitionists were only a small minority, even in New England; but a new party was growing up which, without proposing to abolish the institution where it already existed, was determined that none of the new territories west of the Mississippi should add to the number of Slave States. When the nominee of this "Republican" party was elected President in 1860, many Southerners felt that the time had come for decisive action, before worse things befell them. South Carolina took the lead as she had done thirty years before. She simply cancelled "the compact called the Constitution" and cut herself off from the Union. Her example was followed by the other Southern States, and in the early part of 1861 they all joined together in a "Confederacy of Sovereign and Independent States," with Jefferson Davis of Mississippi as their President, and Richmond, Virginia, as their capital.

Some Northerners were disposed to "let our erring sisters go," but the new President took a much more serious view of his responsibilities. Abraham Lincoln was perhaps the greatest figure in the history of democratic institutions. He was a self-1809-1865 educated man who in his early days had lived the rough life of a pioneer in the Middle West, and had later become a lawyer. He was now called to the highest office of State at the most tremendous crisis not only for his own country but for the cause of Democracy everywhere. If the Secession became an accomplished fact the greatness of the United States would be at an end, for there would be nothing to prevent other groups of States from following the precedent, whenever the policy of the Federal Government displeased them; and thus all the world would say that Democracy had proved unequal to the task of holding together the elements of a great State.

§ 145. Civil War.—The story of the War of Secession cannot 1861-1865 be told here, but we must take note of several of its features that were of permanent importance.

Both sides were compelled to have resort to compulsory service, and the proportion of citizens under arms was higher than in any other war in history. At first the advantage lay with the South. Their people were more accustomed to open-air life than the clerks and factory-hands of the North. They had also the advantage of being on the defensive: it was the North who wanted to conquer them, not they the North. Again, most of the ablest officers of the United States Army joined them, amongst whom

1807- was Robert E. Lee, who is considered by many military experts  
1870 to be the greatest that the Anglo-Saxon race has ever produced

There were certain features of the situation, however, which favoured the Northerners ; and these were such as were bound to bring them victory in the long run, provided that they held on with sufficient courage and tenacity. Firstly, their mines, factories, and farms made them practically self-supporting ; and secondly, they controlled the Federal Navy. They could go on producing the sinews of war indefinitely, while the South had to rely on getting supplies from Europe in return for her cotton crop, which the blockade of her ports by the North prevented her from exporting. Moreover, the Northern States had nearly double the population on which to draw.

For the first two or three years of the war, however, everything seemed to go against the Federal Government. The difficulties with which Lincoln had to contend were formidable indeed. The problem of holding the " Border States " loyal to the Union, the improvisation of an efficient war-machine out of institutions designed only for peace, the apparently hopeless search for competent commanders, personal jealousies among rival politicians, acute financial crises, the agitation of " defeatists " who opposed the continuance of the war altogether, the unsympathetic attitude of European Powers and the possibility that they might intervene and insist upon a peace based on the independence of the Confederate States : all these dangers were overcome in turn by his indomitable courage, his wise statesmanship, and his shrewd understanding of his fellow-men. In the third year of the war circumstances compelled him to abolish slavery in the rebel States, and later on Congress passed the famous Thirteenth Amendment to the Constitution, which forbade the holding of slaves in any part of the United States.

1822- At length Lincoln unearthed an able soldier in General Grant,  
1885 and after that the tide of victory turned definitely in favour of the Union. The casualties in some of the battles were appallingly heavy, but the greater elasticity of its resources enabled the Federal Government to wear its opponents down. By the end of 1864 Lee's army was starving, bare-footed, and in rags. Early the following year he was compelled to surrender to Grant at Appomattox Court House, and the war was over.

A greater task than ever now lay before the President : that of healing the wounds, both spiritual and material, which the war

had inflicted upon the country ; but these victories of peace no less renowned than war were not to be won by him, for within a month of his second inauguration he was assassinated. The April, 1865 Southern fanatic who perpetrated this crime did infinite harm to his own cause as well as to America generally, for Lincoln's plans for Reconstruction were wise and generous to the South, and the task now fell to men far less able and less high-minded than he. Indeed, if the character and conduct of Lincoln during the war were a great credit to democratic government, those of his successors were very much the reverse. The Republicans were determined to maintain by fair means or foul their control over the Federal Government. To this end they sent batches of 1868 professional politicians nicknamed "carpet-baggers" into the Southern States, to organise the enfranchised negroes into a "Republican Party" that would outvote the whites at every election for State or Federal offices. The most shameless corruption and intimidation were employed, and grinning negro "officials" voted each other large sums out of the taxes which their former masters had to pay. At length the Southerners started a secret society called the "Ku Klux Klan," the members of which rode by night in a hideous disguise, shooting, burning, and terrorising, so as to drive the "carpet-baggers" back to where they came from and to frighten the blacks into surrendering their hold over the Government.

Something like twenty years passed before the country really settled down after all these disturbances ; but in the end the Union became a good deal closer than it had ever been during the half-century before the war. All desire for Secession has long since disappeared from the South.

§ 146. Reactions in Great Britain.—The English nation looked on at the terrible spectacle of the Civil War with an absorbed interest, but with very divided sympathies. This division was not at all on the same lines as that of the political parties ; it was purely social. All the governing classes, all the educated classes, believed that the South would win, and hoped that it would. The reasons for this attitude were varied and complex. Partly it was due to the sympathy that a crowd around a street fight shows for the smaller combatant—especially if he shows signs of winning ; partly it was due to the close ties that bound our cotton manufacturers to the planters of the Southern States, while the Northerners imposed protective duties against our

products; partly it was due to a snobbish feeling that the Southerners were "gentlemen" and the "Yankees" mere vulgar commercial fellows; and beneath all this there is no doubt that some people, including Palmerston himself, contemplated a disruption of the Union with satisfaction as a fortunate weakening of a rival state. The working classes, on the other hand, were just as whole-heartedly in favour of the North. Many had friends and relatives fighting in the Federal armies, for, as we have already seen, practically the whole of the emigration during the "Hungry Forties" had been to the Northern States.

Dec.,  
1861

The first episode which brought the British Government into direct contact with the war was the affair of the *Trent* in October, 1861. Two Southern envoys had been sent to Europe in this British ship to seek foreign aid on behalf of the Confederacy. A United States warship stopped the *Trent* and carried off Messrs. Slidell and Mason to New York. There the exploit was greeted with frantic jubilation, and Captain Wilkes became a national hero; but in England the insult to the Union Jack aroused fierce indignation. For a time it seemed as if we should go to war with the Federal Government—a war which would almost certainly have resulted in the perpetuation of slavery; but this unthinkable calamity was averted, largely through the influence of the Prince Consort—the last service he was able to render the country of his adoption, for he died a few weeks later. President Lincoln realised that the seizure could not be justified, and the prisoners were released.

In the next chapter of Anglo-American relationships, however, the wrong was on the other side. The Confederate States, having no navy of their own, set about getting one built in British shipyards. This was, of course, a breach of International Law, but the combination of political sympathies with business interests made an irresistible appeal to British shipbuilders. Three ships were successfully built in secret and sent out to destroy the merchant fleet of the North—for they were not fighting-ships so much as what would now be called "commerce-raiders." In the summer of 1862, the United States Ambassador in London, Charles Francis Adams, drew the attention of the British Government to the fact that another such ship was being built at Birkenhead. The Ministry, half-blinded by its sympathy with the Confederate States, declared itself unable to take any steps without more definite evidence than Adams was able to produce at the time.

When, therefore, it showed that it could not contrive to supply an army with the bare necessities of life in trenches less than ten miles from its sea-base, and that its control of its own army was rotten with crass stupidity and shameless nepotism, the feeling naturally arose that it did not inspire sufficient confidence to be entrusted with a monopoly of the powers of government.

The American Civil War, too, seemed to point in the same direction; for the result of that was above all things a triumph § 140 for democratic principles, and by a side-issue it gave an opportunity to the English working classes to show the stuff they were made of. The fortitude with which the people of Lancashire bore their sufferings during the cotton famine brought into many minds the reflection that men who could exhibit such self-restraint and public spirit might well be entrusted with some share of political power.

Lastly, we must mention three personal factors. The great oratorical powers of John Bright had been for the last ten years devoted mainly to this cause. His first crusade, that for Free § 77 Trade, had won him immense influence and popularity. This influence and popularity he had sacrificed by opposing the Crimean § 120 War fever. Events had since shown that he had been right and the Government and people of England wrong; and thus, when he took up the cause of Parliamentary Reform he was listened to with renewed respect. He soon became the oracle of the Non-conformist bodies so strong in the North and Midlands, where his eloquence had a great effect in stirring up a demand for the vote.

The second personal factor was that "the slow and resistless force of conviction" (as he himself said) was gradually turning Gladstone into a Radical. This development was brought home to friend and foe by the speech in support of Russell's 1864 Reform Bill from which our chapter-heading is a quotation. It implied a denial of the accepted view that a man's political power should be in some way proportionate to his "stake in the country." Palmerston was shocked at the indiscretion of such utterances in a member of his Cabinet; but they made Gladstone immensely popular outside Parliament, and his magnetic personality and powerful oratory aroused great enthusiasm wherever he spoke on the subject.

The third personal factor in the situation was Lord Palmerston himself: he died in 1865, and henceforth the cause of Reform was freed from its most hampering obstacle.



## CHAPTER XXV

### The Parting of the Ways.

"I venture to say that every man who is not presumably incapacitated by some consideration of personal unfitness is morally entitled to come within the pale of the constitution."—W. E. GLADSTONE.

"I ask you, if you want venality, ignorance, drunkenness, and the means of intimidation, if you want impulsive, unreflecting, violent people, where will you go to look for them—to the top or to the bottom?"—ROBERT LOWE.

§ 129 The Reform Bill of 1832 made the upper middle class the predominant factor in the State. The thirty-five years which followed formed a distinct epoch in English history. Some people, even at the present day, look upon this as the period when England was best governed. The aristocratic monopoly had been broken up, and democratic restlessness had not begun. Britain became immensely richer, more powerful, and more enlightened than she had ever been before. She had adopted Free Trade, and Cobden's Commercial Treaty with France (1860) seemed to be the prelude to the rest of the world following her example. She occupied such a supreme position in manufactures and commerce as no country has held before or since. Her revenue had increased, in Gladstone's words, "by leaps and bounds." Her colonies were developing rapidly under the wise policy which she had learned from her earlier experiences. Except for the brief interlude in the Crimea she had enjoyed complete immunity from the losses and anxieties of war. Domestic unrest had died away under the soothing influence of a material prosperity the effects of which had filtered down to the lowest strata of her society. Her Constitution appeared, both to her own statesmen and to those of foreign countries, to be ideally suited to the needs of a civilised nation, and she had acted as a sort of kindly godmother to various foreign nations in their struggles to attain to her own state of political

a meeting, the railings were torn down, and the meeting held in spite of the prohibition. The memory of old Lord John must have gone back to the great days of 1831. § 40

There was no just reason why the opinion of London should count for more than that of Birmingham or Manchester, but it was nearer to the seat of government, and these doings had a great effect on the views of the politicians at Westminster. One of these, in particular, began to realise that there could be no resisting such a tidal wave of popular feeling, and to consider whether it could not be used for the benefit of his own party.

§ 150. A Study in Parliamentary Tactics.—Disraeli saw 1867 that if the Conservatives refused to bring in a Reform Bill their own tenure of office would be very short, and the only result would be that the Liberals would in the end have the credit with the new voters of having enfranchised them. Far better a Tory Bill than a Radical one, if Bill there must be. And why not? Why should the Liberals claim a monopoly of Reform? Had not his own party admitted the general principle that an extension of the franchise was desirable, by bringing in a Bill of their own in 1859? Had not Disraeli himself always upheld the ideal of § 128 a partnership between the aristocracy and the masses, to the exclusion of the middle class? Here was a chance to bring the Tory Democracy into being, and to establish it firmly in public favour.

These were the arguments which he laid before his chief before the opening of the session of 1867. Lord Derby was not keen on the subject for its own sake, but he agreed that if Reform was inevitable, it was better that his own party should have the handling of it rather than his opponents. Thus the first act of the Government which had got into power by defeating a Reform Bill was to bring in one of its own. It proved to be a tame half-hearted measure, and it met with so chilling a reception in the House that within a few days Disraeli announced that it would be dropped, and another one substituted for it. The second Bill was considerably bolder, and three important members of the Government, including Lord Cranborne (the future Marquis of Salisbury), resigned rather than share any responsibility for it.

These rapid developments were rather startling, but when the true story of what lay behind them leaked out, surprise was turned to amusement. It appeared that Disraeli had prepared

two alternative measures, a big one and a little one. The former had been adopted by the Cabinet at a meeting held on a Saturday—on the Sunday Cranborne had gone into the figures and had been alarmed to find that the Bill practically amounted to household suffrage—on the Monday he had announced that he would have to resign if the Government persisted with it—thereupon it had taken the Cabinet only ten minutes to decide that it would be better to retain Cranborne by substituting the other Bill. As we have seen, this No. 2 Bill was practically rejected by the House, and the Ministry had then felt that rather than abandon Reform altogether they had better fall back on Bill No. 1 again, and let Cranborne and his friends go : which they did.

As for the Bill which made its debut amidst such alarms behind the scenes, it might reasonably be maintained that there was nothing in it contrary to Conservative principles, for although it added a large number of voters to the roll, these concessions were hedged about with so many precautions that they really amounted to very little. But its character was quite altered during its passage through the House. As each clause came up for consideration the Opposition carried drastic amendments in the teeth of the Government. Disraeli said again and again that he could make no further concessions, but whenever he was defeated he always found a loophole for escape from the necessity of withdrawing the Bill. By the time it had passed the House of Commons it had been altered out of all recognition, and made far more sweeping changes than the Whig Bill which had been defeated the year before. Many of the Conservatives were disposed to vote against it, but Lord Derby was determined that this annoying question should be settled and done with, once for all. He brought his disorderly followers to heel with the threat that if the Bill were rejected he would dissolve, which would cost each of them some hundreds of pounds for election expenses. When the House of Lords (in which there was, and is, a permanent Tory majority) showed a similar inclination to throw the Bill out, Derby could not terrorise them with the bogey of a General Election, but he announced that if they did not pass the Bill he would resign, which would infallibly bring the Liberals back into power.

1867

§ 151. "A Leap in the Dark."—Thus there passed into law a measure which made a profound change in the whole basis

of political power in this country. It gave the vote to all men who maintained households and paid rates and taxes. The town-dwellers were more affected than the cottagers in rural districts; and, briefly summarised, it might be said that the Bill enfranchised the artisan class. Abraham Lincoln once said that "God must be very fond of the common folk, since he made so many of them;" and the consequence of granting household suffrage was to put the ultimate power in the Commonwealth into the hands of these "common folk."

The political prophets foretold that the end of all things was at hand. Disraeli might boast that he had "dished the Whigs," but his Chief candidly confessed that it was a "leap in the dark," the result of which neither he nor anyone else could foresee. Carlyle likened the passing of the Bill to "shooting Niagara." Lord Cranborne said that the deed of his former colleagues was "a political betrayal without a parallel in our parliamentary annals." Disraeli himself had prophesied, only a year before, that if ever the franchise were lowered below a £7 rental the result would be "a horde of selfish and obscure mediocrities in Parliament."

No very sensational changes followed the Bill, however. The general character of Parliament altered very gradually, but many years were to pass before the working men found a way of being represented by members of their own class; for in those days there was no "payment of members," and no "political levy" by the Trade Unions. The next few years were certainly full of parliamentary activity, much of which had a democratic tendency; but this activity was mainly due to the floods of legislative arrears which had long been held up by Palmerston's "Conservatism at home." If Disraeli hoped that the newly enfranchised working men would show their gratitude by giving the Conservatives a thumping majority at the next election, he was doomed to disappointment. Possibly they doubted the sincerity of his conversion to household suffrage, possibly they noted how little of his own design there was about the features of the Bill in its final form. What is certain is that "having received the vote from Mr. Disraeli they said 'Thank you, Mr. Gladstone,'" and the next House of Commons contained a Liberal majority of 120.

The real importance of the Reform Bill of 1867 did not lie in its immediate effects, but in the fact that it established as a

part of our constitution the principle that in the eyes of the law "one man is as good as another," and is entitled to as great a share of political power.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Write a history of Parliamentary Reform from 1783 to 1867.
2. Write a history of the Triumvirate Ministry, bringing in its relationship with the Risorgimento and The War of Secession.
3. Expand the two quotations at the head of the chapter into what you consider to be the arguments for and against Household Suffrage.

## CHAPTER XXVI

### The Expansion of the Universe

“ Out of the ground up rose,  
As from his lair, the wild beast, where he wons,  
In forest wild, in thicket, brake or den ; . . .  
The grassy clods now calved ; now half appeared  
The tawny lion, pawing to get free  
His hinder parts, then springs, as broke from bonds,  
And rampant shakes his brinded mane.”

MILTON, *Paradise Lost*, Book VII.

“ When I first came to the notion . . . of a succession of extinctions of species and creations of new ones, going on perpetually now, and through an indefinite period of the past, and to continue for ages to come, all in accommodation to the changes which must continue in the inanimate earth, the idea struck me as the grandest I had ever conceived, as regards the attributes of the Presiding Mind.”—SIR CHARLES LYELL, *Letters*.

To the Political and Economic Revolutions from which flowed the manifold changes in man's way of life in the nineteenth century, we must now add a third, of which the effects were quite as profound, though less obvious to the eye : the Revolution in Science, which put man into a new way of looking at the universe and at his place in it. Man does not live by bread alone, nor is his existence conditioned merely by social and political agencies. His reason, his understanding, his imagination, his spiritual insight into the meaning of things,—all these have a profound effect upon his history ; and all these were stimulated into a fresh activity by the Theory of Evolution.

Like its political counterpart (to which, indeed, it owed much of its inspiration), the Scientific Revolution was a release from the bondage of tradition, and called forth a new faith in the progress of the race. It brought the universe to life. The study of Nature has ceased to be a magic lantern show of beautiful but isolated pictures, and has become a cinematograph performance, in which we can see a story developing before our eyes. To vary the

metaphor, the sun has risen on a landscape through which we had been groping, only half seeing and understanding the significance of the dim shapes with which we were surrounded. We have now set to work in this new light to take stock of the surroundings hitherto half-hidden from us, and to find our bearings amongst them. We are still somewhat dazzled by the sudden dawn, but we are already getting on much better and much faster than we could in the old twilight.

Clearly we must take some account of this great spiritual adventure, for it was one of the most characteristic features of the century we are studying; and "it is the spirit which quickeneth."

§ 152. *What? Whence? How? Whither?*—These are the questions which press on every developing mind. Man has been asking them ever since his first appearance on the planet. His attempts to find an answer to them, his guesses and speculations and theories: this is what we call Philosophy. To primitive man who saw the daily miracle of his sustenance growing out of the soil, the explanation seemed to be that all living forms were fashioned out of Mother Earth ("dust to dust"), and his narrow experience suggested that they must each have sprung into existence by a special act of creation. Countless nature-myths and legends have grown out of this fancy. Primitive man founded his religion on it; his priests adopted and adapted it, and set his inquiring mind to rest with a definite explanation that such and such was the origin of the world and its inhabitants.

But the Greek freedom and fearlessness in speculation—to which our civilisation owes almost all that is best in it—was not satisfied. The spirit of Wonder and the spirit of Speculation which were always alive in Hellas developed into Aristotle's conception of "a divine thought which gradually realises itself in the process of becoming." In the next era Lucretius had one of his prophetic flashes of insight into the "nature of things," when he suggested that races of men have lived and disappeared, and have been replaced by others which have been preserved by their gifts of "courage, or craft or speed."

The Catholic Church in the Middle Ages was the trustee for civilisation in a world of political strife and bloodshed; to fulfil that end she placed a "taboo" on such disintegrating processes as doubt and inquiry. Like a parent to a child, she said: Don't ask questions; you can't understand such things; get on with

your work. But just as there comes a time in the child's development when the significance of some of its surroundings begins to dawn on it, and when it throws off the limitations imposed upon it by the fond parent who has hitherto guided it for its own good : so it was with our civilisation. That Re-birth of Worldly Wisdom which we call the Renaissance set the spirit of inquiry upon its endless quest once more. The circumnavigators found that, contrary to the teaching of the Church, the world was round ; the astronomers found that it was not the centre of the universe, nor even of its own little solar system.

The rains of ancient philosophy had sunk into the mountain-side, and had long been lost to view ; but the waters now welled forth in a new form, and began to flow. Descartes, Spinoza, and Kant made their pregnant guesses at the meaning of things ; Newton, Buffon, and Linnæus studied the phenomena of nature, and gradually developed the idea of an affinity among objects hitherto regarded as unrelated.

§ 153. The Earth grows suddenly Older. — In 1802, Laplace, the famous French mathematician and astronomer, added to one of the later editions of his *Exposition du système du Monde* an appendix in which he threw out the suggestion that the solar system (and by implication all the other heavenly bodies) were originally nebulæ which had become consolidated by centripetal energy. The idea was carried further by Sir John Herschell, and in some form or other it ruled man's conception of the universe for nearly a century. The fact that the Nebular Hypothesis is now discarded does not diminish the importance of its effect on the mind of man. From it grew the idea of a developing world ; it put the Biblical story of Creation in a new light ; it immensely lengthened the vistas of space.

The study of geology was tending in the same direction. A contest began between those geologists who accepted the current idea that the varieties in the earth's crust had been caused by prodigious convulsions of nature within comparatively narrow limits of time, and those who believed that they were the result of a steady, slow process of change spread over millions of years and still going on. The "Catastrophists" had orthodox theology on their side, for the accepted chronology of Bible History put the creation of the world in the year 4004 B.C., while the "Uniformitarians" required hundreds or even thousands of millions of years for their processes to take effect. In the end the latter



completely vanquished their opponents. The appearance of Sir Charles Lyell's *Elements of Geology*, in 1830, was the turning-point in the battle, and it would be difficult to find any educated person to-day—above all, any geologist—who still entertained the notion of a 6,000-year-old earth.

The effect of this upon the world of thought and imagination was tremendous. Just as the astronomers had put man into a new setting in Space—and a very much humbler one than he had till then conceived for himself—so the geologists now put him into a humbler position in Time. And it gave encouragement to more daring speculations still. If the inorganic world was the product of natural agencies still in operation, was it not an obvious inference that a similar process had taken place, was still taking place, in the living beings who inhabit it?

§ 154. Charles Robert Darwin.—Aristotle and Lucretius had had glimpses of this conception, but it had long lain dormant. The difficulties in the way of accepting it were difficult to overcome. The geologists had now given the *time* that was necessary for such a process to operate, but the great difficulty was that no one had suggested the *method*. Early in the century a French zoologist named Lamarck had suggested that animals acquire characteristics to suit their conditions of life, and transmit these adaptations to their offspring. The theory was ingenious but unconvincing, and it attracted little attention. Zoologists and botanists went on piling up masses of observations; the general feeling was growing that the only explanation that would fit them all was the development of one species out of another; but what was lacking was any plausible theory as to how this development came about. Until the answer to this riddle was found they were groping in the dark.

1809–1882 The year of the publication of Lamarck's *Philosophie Zoologique* was the year also of the birth of Charles Darwin, whose life's work it was to throw light in these dark places, and to put the idea of Evolution upon a firm basis of observed and co-ordinated facts. He was educated at Shrewsbury and Cambridge, and he enjoyed throughout his life the advantage of a private income which enabled him to devote himself to scientific pursuits. He was appointed Naturalist to an expedition sent by the Government in H.M.S. *Beagle*, to make certain hydrographical observations off the coasts of South America. Darwin's chief interest was in geology, in which he was a disciple of Lyell's;

and he was struck with a peculiar feature about the fossil remains of extinct species of plants and animals which he found in South America; they all bore clear resemblances to existing forms of life there. Did this not suggest that there was some connecting link between them, some stream of development going on through the ages? He began to take an interest in the current speculations upon Evolution, to which he had hitherto paid little attention. Then when the ship reached the Galapagos Islands he found that each island had its own species of mocking bird. Was each the result of a special act of creation?

For some time after his return home Darwin was engaged in arranging his specimens and editing his note-book, but always his mind was engaged in that fascinating puzzle. Apparently new forms of life had developed out of old forms to suit changing conditions around them; but *how*? Then, in an hour of relaxation he read Malthus' famous "Essay" which sets forth the <sup>§ 22</sup> theory that population always increases as long as there is food for it, and then is reduced by the struggle for existence. Here, it seemed to Darwin, was the key to the puzzle which had worried scientists so long. In the struggle for existence, who go under? The weakest, those least suited to the existing conditions of life. Then, if the conditions of life change, the type of creature that survives will change too.

Darwin had the scientific mind which rebels against jumping to conclusions. He set to work, observing, reading, taking notes of everything that could throw any light on the subject. At the end of four years he "allowed himself the luxury," as he said, of writing a brief abstract of the theory which had by this time taken a definite shape in his mind. Then twelve years more of study and experiment. Just as he was about to write the book that was to set forth the result of his labours, he received a letter from Borneo, from Alfred Russel Wallace, a brother naturalist, 1823- suggesting the very same theory. It had flashed into his mind 1913 as he lay ill of a malarial fever, while on an expedition for collecting botanical specimens, which was his way of earning his living. Then ensued a contest in generosity between the two men, which it may be said that Wallace won, for the credit of the theory that was to shake the scientific world to its foundations has always been given to Darwin. This was not unjust, however, for hitting upon the idea was not so important as supporting it by the accumulation and marshalling of the masses of apparently

unrelated evidence collected by other observers; and for this Wallace had not the time nor the patience nor the ingenuity required.

§ 155. "The Child of the Past and Parent of the Future."  
—*The Origin of Species* appeared in 1859. It takes as a hypothesis that the manifold and complicated forms of animal and vegetable life which we see around us to-day have been developed through the ages from simpler types, and perhaps ultimately from one single kind of living cell, and it sets out to prove that this development has been shaped by what was called by Darwin "Natural Selection," and afterwards by Herbert Spencer "The Survival of the Fittest."

We are all familiar with the fact that animals resemble their parents in a general way, but have characteristics of their own; if it were otherwise, the improvement of the breed of our cattle and horses, for instance, would be impossible. We are all familiar, too, with the struggle for existence; if it were not for this a single species of bacterium would choke the whole world within a fortnight. Those individuals which are less suited to their environment *tend* to perish in this struggle before they have time to mate and produce progeny which would *tend* to perpetuate their unsuitable qualities. Every living species has developed from some pre-existing species, and has taken its present form by gradual changes through the ages. The rate of progress is by no means uniform. Sometimes a species which is well adapted to its environment will remain practically stationary for thousands of years—like the marsupials of Australia, for instance. Sometimes, on the other hand, Nature makes a sudden leap, and produces a sort of freak that is quite different from its ancestors. If the new development is helpful to the creature in the struggle for existence, it will be perpetuated, and a great step will have been taken towards a new species. The process of natural selection acting on some one species of animal or vegetable life has been likened to a man throwing earth against a sieve. The earth that he throws is the sum of the variations which occur in the species; the mesh of the sieve is the particular environment in which the creature lives; the force that the man uses is the struggle for existence.

The great feature of Darwin's book was the mass of evidence which he presented to support and illustrate his hypothesis, evidence drawn from many sources, and from many branches of

science. To take one example : geologists had long noticed that the same kinds of fossils are always found in the same rocks, and that the older the rocks the more primitive are the types of life represented by the fossils that are found in them. Mammals, birds, reptiles, fishes in turn appear and disappear, as we get down to older and older rocks ; and the same process occurs with vegetable life. These facts had long been observed but their significance had never been grasped. Darwin's theory exactly fitted and explained them, and at once they began to take on a new meaning.

§ 156. Later Developments.—Naturally the book and its author came in for a great deal of abuse from those who felt that their religious faith depended on the literal acceptance of the words of Scripture ; many of the older generation of scientists, too, looked askance at such a threat to their settled ideas ; while less serious-minded people were disposed to treat the whole thing as a good joke. Some of those who were inclined to think that "there might be something in it" in the case of plants and the lower animals, drew back from the obvious inference that the theory applied to man himself. Even Darwin was at first somewhat chary of definitely expressing this corollary of his proposition, and ten years passed before his *Descent of Man* fairly faced the issue, and supported with an almost incontrovertible array of evidence the suggestion that man and the anthropoid apes had a common ancestor.

Here, again, what science owes to Darwin is not the idea itself. The idea was already in the air. Even an amateur scientist like Tennyson had assumed something of the sort when he wrote in *Maud* (before the publication of *The Origin of Species* even) :

"A monstrous eft was of old the Lord and Master of Earth,  
For him did his high sun flame, and his river billowing ran,  
And he felt himself in his force to be Nature's crowning race. . . .  
So many a million of ages have gone to the making of man ;  
He now is first, but is he the last ? is he not too base ? "

What Darwin did was to give the theory a definite form, to investigate and set forth the evidence for it.

The opposition to the doctrine gradually died down. The idea that man is on the up-grade from a lower stage of existence was quite in accord with the spirit of the age. Ministers of religion had at first felt that Evolution was an assault on the

very foundations of their faith, but the more enlightened of them soon began to realise that it raised man's conception of Providence and Creation into a loftier plane.

Further research has shown that Darwin was mistaken in some of his conjectures and arguments ; but this is only what he—the most modest and open-minded of men—would have expected. The study of Heredity, for instance, has been carried much further, and has been shown to have a greater bearing on Evolution than he had supposed ; there is a school of biologists who think that there was more truth in Lamarck's idea than was realised in the middle of the century ; and many phenomena have been adduced which do not seem to be compatible with the theory of Natural Selection. But the broad principle of a universe in which all things are for ever in a state of becoming, and in which the forms of living matter have been, and are being, and will be, fashioned by the struggle for existence : this is the very foundation of all the manifold biological studies which are being pursued to-day.

1820-1903 § 157. Wider Applications.—Since Darwin's day, every department of natural science has been recast in the new light thrown upon it by the theory of Evolution ; and Herbert Spencer set himself the colossal task of co-ordinating all knowledge into a systematic interpretation of that theory. In a way, he might be considered the philosopher of that belief in Progress which was so characteristic of his generation.

Some scientific studies may almost be said to have had their origin in the theory. Let us take as an instance one of these most closely connected with history. Sociology is the study of man as a social being. So long as it was merely concerned with conditions and organisations of society existing in the present or in the past, considered simply as isolated facts, it hardly deserved the name of a science at all, but when it began to study society as a developing organism, it began to look upon such institutions as family life, the forms of government, the relative position of men and women, in a totally new light. The manners and customs of the various primitive races still inhabiting the earth take on a new interest, a new significance when we realise that they exhibit to our eyes the stages of progress through which our own civilisation has passed ; and the features of our present social system can now be understood and interpreted in a way that was never possible before. We realise that in the struggle for existence among nations, as among individuals, the

fittest will survive ; and we realise also that those nations that cannot adapt themselves to new conditions must infallibly go under. We ask ourselves what are the qualities in a nation, or in a race of men, that will enable it to survive ; we can use our intelligence to find means to influence the course of evolution. No longer content with knowing *what* things are, we also seek to know *whence* that we may discover *whither*, and perchance direct in some measure the stream of progress.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Trace the connection between the doctrine of Evolution and the French Revolution.
2. Where did the giraffe get his long neck from (*a*) according to Lamarck ; (*b*) according to Darwin.
3. The Germans thought that their national qualities would enable them to defeat the rest of Europe in the struggle for existence. How far were they justified ?
4. Trace the idea of Evolution through the ages.

SECOND EPOCH OF REFORM

1867	PARLIAMENTARY REFORM		
1868			
1869	IRISH CHURCH ACT	Endowed Schools Commission	
1870	IRISH LAND ACT	Education Act	ARMY ENLISTMENT ACT
1871	FIRST ARBITRATION TREATY	Abolition of Religious Tests Criminal Law Amendment Act Bank Holidays Act	Abolition of Purchase Civil Service Reform
1872		LICENSING ACT Ballot Act	Linked Battalions Reform of Admiralty
1873	(Irish Universities Bill)	Judicature Act	

## CHAPTER XXVII

### Gladstone's "Upas Tree"

"I was standing by him, holding his coat on my arm while he in his shirt sleeves was wielding an axe to cut down a tree. Up came a telegraph messenger. He took the telegram, opened it and read it, then handed it to me, speaking only two words, 'Very significant,' and at once resumed his work. The message merely stated that General Grey would arrive that evening from Windsor. This, of course, implied that a mandate was coming from the Queen charging Mr. Gladstone with the formation of his first Government. . . . After a few moments the blows ceased, and Mr. Gladstone, resting on the handle of his axe, looked up and with deep earnestness in his voice and with great intensity in his face, exclaimed, 'My mission is to pacify Ireland.' He then resumed his task, and never said another word till the tree was down."—EVELYN ASHLEY, in the *National Review*, June, 1898.

We have now come to the second great period of reform in the history of the nineteenth century. Just as the Parliamentary Reform of 1832 was followed by a decade of revolutionary changes in the law of the land, changes that affected nearly every aspect of social life, so also was that of 1867. And for the same reason: there were long arrears of legislation to be made up after the period of quiescence which had gone before.

The Prime Minister during this second momentous epoch 1809-1898 was William Ewart Gladstone. We have traced his career from 1898 a subordinate position in the Tory Cabinet of Peel to that of the leader of the most advanced wing of the Liberal party. We have seen his striking successes as Chancellor of the Exchequer § 117 and his championship of the oppressed peoples of Europe. We shall now see how he came to take up the cause which was to be the mainspring of his political interests for the remaining thirty years of his long life. He did indeed, in the words of the quotation at the head of this chapter, make it his mission to pacify Ireland—with what success we shall shortly be able to form some opinion.



1866-  
1868      § 158. The Fenians.—Whatever wrongs Ireland has suffered at the hands of England, these misdeeds did not go unpunished, for a large proportion of the troubles and anxieties of English Governments have had their origin across the Irish Sea ever since the Rebellion of '98 and the Act of Union which was its sequel. The crisis came in 1845-46, when the combined effects of the  
§ 78 famine and of misgovernment drove thousands of Irishmen abroad—some to the colonies, but most to America. The Irish population of the United States increased rapidly, until more of the nation lived there than remained at home in Ireland, and every exile cherished in his heart a hatred of England which he instilled into his children. When the War of Secession came to an end, the labour markets were flooded with thousands of young Irishmen discharged from the armies, most of them with a taste for fighting, and few of them with any resources in civil life; it was but natural that they should turn their thoughts to the emancipation of Ireland from the detested rule of the Saxon—especially as England had managed to arouse the hostility both of Federals and Confederates during the Civil War. A secret society was formed, with headquarters in New York and branches in Dublin and Cork. Its official title was the “Clan na Gael,” but its members were better known by the nickname “Fenians,” from the name of the bodyguard of Finn MacCoul, a legendary King of Ireland. The basis of the Fenian movement was neither religious nor agrarian; it was purely political, and its object was to set up an independent Irish Republic. Events ran the same course as they had done so often in the past: there were traitors in the Irish counsels, the English Government was kept informed of every development, and it struck the movement down at the most suitable moment. Habeas Corpus was suspended, hundreds of conspirators were sentenced to various terms of penal servitude, while hundreds more fled to the hills and died of starvation and exposure during the “Fenian Winter” of 1866-67.

That was the end of the main plot. There were several by-plots, but they all miscarried. A scheme to seize Chester Castle by a *coup de main* was so effectively forestalled by the Government that nothing whatever happened. An attempt was made to rescue some Fenian “suspects” from a prison van in the streets of Manchester; a policeman was half-accidentally killed in the affray, and four men (the famous “Manchester Martyrs”) were hanged for the crime. Lastly, a miscreant blew in the walls of

Clerkenwell prison with gunpowder, with the idea of releasing some Fenians whom he supposed to be locked up there; he rescued no prisoners, but the explosion killed several women and children living in the neighbourhood.

§ 159. "The Sphere of Practical Politics."—When Gladstone said, in the midst of the Fenian agitation, that these events "had brought the question of Irish reform within the sphere of practical politics," his opponents accused him of encouraging sedition, but there was much truth in the phrase. The Fenian movement, however futile and misguided in itself, had focussed public attention on "the Irish question," and had made the British nation realise that "something must be done about it." What that something was, Gladstone now set himself to discover. He came to the conclusion that the remedy might be found in three pieces of legislation; to use his own metaphor, the Irish trouble was a Upas tree whose three poisonous branches he was determined to cut down as soon as he should be in a position to do so.

The first of these to be attacked was the position of the Established Church in Ireland. This was a survival of the bad old days of the eighteenth century when England was making vain efforts to drive the Catholic population of Ireland into becoming § 36 Protestant Episcopalians. Not more than a seventh of the people belonged to it, even now; but it still maintained the privileged position of being the State Church. Of course, the crude barbarities of the Penal Code had long since been abolished, and private benefactors (mostly resident in the U.S.A.) had built Catholic churches everywhere, so that the inconsistency of having great empty parish churches alongside tiny Catholic chapels crowded to the doors was no longer to be seen. But the position of the "English" Church remained a symbol and an embodiment of the hated old Protestant ascendancy; in all public functions the Irish people were reminded that they were the subjects of what they still regarded as a foreign Power.

Gladstone himself was a Churchman through and through, but he fully realised the absurdity, the injustice, and the unwisdom of this state of affairs. He therefore brought up in Parliament a series of resolutions to the effect that the time had come for disestablishing the Church of Ireland, and placing it on an equality with the other religious bodies in that country. Disraeli had recently succeeded to the Premiership owing to the

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position as that of a Nonconformist body in England. It was no longer to occupy a privileged position, and was to manage its own affairs without any interference by the Government. Its property, accumulated through the centuries by private benefactions and by the confiscation of Irishmen's property, was to be taken over by the Government, and to be used partly to make suitable provision for the maintenance of the clergy, and partly to give compensation to those superfluous clergymen who would no longer be required under the more economical distribution of its personnel. The residue of its wealth was to be used for the relief of poverty and suffering in Ireland.

The outcry against the Bill was loud and prolonged: the Cabinet was called a band of brigands polluting with sacrilegious hands the Church of their fathers, and so on. The House of Peers would dearly have loved to reject it, and the Queen could not conceal her dislike of it. But the Government was in a very strong position; the recent election had been fought on this very question, and the constituencies had declared themselves in favour of Disestablishment in so unequivocal a way that the Opposition could do no more than wring some minor concession from Gladstone as to the amount of the "compensation fund." The Bill became law in 1869, and proved a complete success. The position of the Irish clergy became much stronger and more satisfactory than it had ever been before, and the prediction that this change would lead to the Disestablishment of the English Church as well was signally falsified in the event.

§ 161. *The Problem of the Land.*—The position of the Church was merely a sentimental grievance to Irishmen; Gladstone now turned to one that had a much more practical bearing on their daily lives. Englishmen had bungled all their dealings with Ireland because they had never realised that the traditions and history of that country were utterly different from England's. The foundations of the Irish national system of land-holding had been laid in the remote past, and were similar to those of many backward races. Ownership was not, as in England, vested in an individual, but was shared by all the members of a clan or sept. The Chief did not regard himself as the owner of the soil, and the clansmen as his tenants; such a relationship was unknown. That was one broad historical distinction between the two countries. Another was that in the course of repeated English "settlements" most of the land had been confiscated in comparatively recent

times and made over to alien landlords. A third difference was that in contrast to the English landlord, who usually lived on his estates for a considerable part of each year, and took a deep interest in his tenants and their farms, in Ireland the landlords were often absentees whose only concern about their estates was the rents that could be wrung out of them by their "agents." Fourthly, whereas in England it was the custom for the landlord to provide the farm buildings and appliances, in Ireland all that the landlord supplied in return for his rent was the bare earth. Lastly, there were no alternative industrial occupations for the Irish peasant to turn to, as there were for his English counterpart; nor could he get employment on another man's farm, since there were very few Irish agriculturists who could afford to hire labour. Thus he had to get a bit of land to cultivate or he would starve, and see his wife and children starve too. Annual tenancies were the custom, and the competition for holdings was so severe that the most fantastically impossible rents were promised. Thus many cottiers found themselves permanently in arrears with their rent, and permanently at the mercy of the landlord. If by his labour a peasant improved the quality of the land his rent might be raised in proportion, and if he could not pay the increased rent, then somebody else would (or at any rate would promise to), and he would see himself evicted. This put a premium on slovenly cultivation and on an appearance of degraded poverty. The existence of secret societies whose object was the terrorisation and assassination of landlords and their agents was an equally deplorable outcome of the system.

Those who defended the existing state of affairs (such as Lord Palmerston, who was himself an absentee Irish landlord) claimed that a man ought to be able to "do what he liked with his own"; but this maxim hardly seems to apply to the land, a commodity which is necessary to the very existence of human life upon the earth, and of which the supply is rigorously limited by Nature. Of course, not all landlords were absentees, nor were they all hard-hearted tyrants. It was the system that was at fault rather than the men who lived under it. This system, therefore, Gladstone now determined to attack.

1870

§ 162. The First Land Act.—Gladstone addressed himself to the problem with all the ardour that was so characteristic of him. "I have this advantage for learning the Irish Land Question," he wrote to John Bright at the time, "that I do not set out

with the belief that I know it already." For ten, twelve, fourteen hours a day he read books and pamphlets, corresponded with those who best understood the position in Ireland, received deputations, consulted legal authorities, wrote memoranda. At last, early in 1870, his Land Bill was ready.

Broadly speaking, it may be said that it recognised the peasants as part-proprietors of the soil they tilled, by extending the "Tenant-right" which had long existed in Ulster to other parts of the country. (Palmerston had thrust aside a similar proposal ten years before with the jocular but question-begging remark that "Tenant-right was Landlord-wrong.") Special tribunals were to be set up to award "compensation for disturbance" whenever a tenant was evicted from his holding; and he was also to receive compensation for any "unexhausted improvements" he might have made in the land while he had held it, which would increase its rental value. With regard to all such improvements, it was to be assumed that they were the property of the tenant unless the landlord could prove that he himself had made them. In awarding the compensation the tribunals were to take into consideration, not merely the letter of the law, but also any circumstances which might effect it as a matter of "equity," such as an unreasonable rent. The importance of the Act did not lie so much in its actual provisions, however, as in the fact that it limited the absolute power of the landlord over his property, and that it definitely recognised the principle that ownership of land carries with it responsibilities and duties as well as powers and privileges, quite different from those connected with personal property.

§ 163. **Failure and Disappointment.**—Unfortunately the Land Act, however enlightened in principle, had little immediate effect on the condition of the peasantry. For one thing, such sweeping innovations necessarily take a long time to come into effective operation, and for another the landlords soon found loopholes through which some of them could escape from its restrictions. Gladstone had been induced to accept an amendment to the Act by which landlord and tenant could "contract out" of the compensation clauses—that is to say, they could make an agreement not to be bound by them. As there were still far more people wanting land than there was land for them to have, it was quite possible for the landlords to impose such agreements on their prospective tenants as a condition of granting

them leases. Thus many of the evils of the old system continued ; poverty and misery, though to some extent checked, were far from being abolished. Agrarian discontent found its accustomed vent in violence, and Gladstone was obliged tacitly to confess the failure of his efforts by renewed acts of repression.

His onslaught on the first two branches of the "upas tree" had stirred up much hostility from the vested interests of the Church and the landlords ; the third resisted all his efforts to cut it down, and the result of his attempt to do so was nothing less than disastrous to himself and his Ministry. This was the question of Education. Catholics were not allowed by their Church to become members of the existing Protestant universities, and thus higher education was altogether closed to them.

1873 Gladstone sought to remedy this by making Dublin University non-sectarian, with a number of affiliated Colleges in various parts of the country which could adopt any religious basis they chose. We need not stop to inquire any further into the provisions of the Irish University Bill, for it never became law. Many people hated it, and very few really liked it. Naturally the Irish Protestants were furious at the proposal to secularise their university, and in this they were supported by most English Churchmen ; the Catholics saw <sup>mixed education</sup> many objections, and their Bishops refused to support the Bill ; the "Intellectual Radicals" in England ridiculed the idea of a university which had to dispense with the faculties of Theology and History, neither of which could be taught at a rigidly non-sectarian university ; and another class of the Government's supporters, the Non-conformists, were up in arms at the idea of giving a subvention out of the public purse to endow sectarian teaching at the affiliated colleges. Gladstone persisted obstinately with his Bill, despite these various onslaughts, and its defeat in the House ultimately led to his resignation, as we shall see in a later chapter.

But before its decease in 1874 the Gladstone Ministry achieved many other striking pieces of legislation, besides those connected with Ireland. To these reforms we shall later have to devote our attention. Our next chapter will be a digression on contemporary foreign events which were destined to have a profound effect on our own future history, as well as that of almost every country in the world.

SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Give examples of the disastrous effects of Irish grievances on English politics in the nineteenth century.
2. Do you consider that the absolute ownership of land is justifiable ?
3. What were the root causes of Fenianism ?
4. Exactly what did Gladstone mean by his phrase about "the sphere of practical politics" ? Can you foresee unfortunate results from the expression ?



## CHAPTER XXVIII

### The Founding of the German Empire

“Not by speeches and the votes of majorities will the great questions of the time be decided—that was the great blunder of 1848 and 1849—but by blood and iron.”—BISMARCK, in 1863.

WE have more than once referred to the gradual spread of the doctrines of Liberty and Nationality amongst the peoples of Europe, despite the efforts of rulers to repress them. We have seen the ultimate triumph of the Risorgimento in Italy; we shall now see how a corresponding development took place in Germany. [ 102. There the Revolutions of 1848 had gained something in the direction of parliamentary government, but the unification of the German people remained for many years an apparently insoluble problem. What chance was there of such a thing, with thirty-five independent princes, all full of pride, and arrogance, and jealousy of each other?

The solution was hidden—till long after 1848 it was hidden even from himself—in the brain of one man. We shall find the comparison of his methods and achievements with those of Cavour both interesting and instructive.

1859– § 164. The Prussian King and the Prussian Chancellor.—  
1863 —In 1858, Frederick William IV, the well-meaning but weak-willed King who had ruled Prussia since 1840, went mad, and his brother William became Regent. William was already over sixty years old when he was called to rule Prussia, but he was destined to play a momentous part in her history. He had been brought up a soldier, and soldierly qualities always predominated in his simple, straightforward, loyal character. His first important  
1859 act was in connection with the Franco-Austrian War. A subtle schemer would have encouraged Napoleon to crush Austria so

completely that Prussia would at once take the lead in Germany ; § 131 but the Regent felt it a moral duty to support the historic chief of German Princes : he mobilised his army and moved it towards the French frontier. This made both combatants eager for peace : Napoleon did not want the Prussian army to attack him, and Francis Joseph did not want its assistance—his jealousy of the North German upstart made him prefer to lose Lombardy rather than retain it with the aid of Prussian bayonets.

William's mind was too simple and direct to realise all this, however. What worried him was that the mobilisation had shown up several serious shortcomings in the organisation and equipment of his army. He summoned to his aid Von Roon, the ablest military organiser of his generation. Roon drew up a scheme which involved increasing the period of military service from two to three years, forming several new regiments, and putting the Reserve on a fresh basis. These changes called for a greatly increased expenditure, however, and the Liberal majority in the Prussian Parliament refused to sanction it. What was to be done ? "Send for Bismarck" counselled Roon.

Otto von Bismarck was a Prussian : that was the most 1915-1698 important fact about him, and the second was that considerable experience of German Parliaments had made him a convinced Monarchist. He welcomed the idea of German unity, but it must be brought about by an extension of the power of his own King, not by any vague federal scheme in which his beloved Prussia would lose her identity. As for constitutional government like England's, he regarded it as an excellent thing—for England ; Prussia had a different history, and different needs. Parliamentary *legislation* he could admit, but never parliamentary *government*. To make the Prussian Monarchy supreme amongst the elements of the constitution ; then to make it supreme amongst the German states ; and lastly to make it supreme in the councils of Europe—these were the achievements of his marvellous career. But all things are possible to a man like Bismarck, irresistibly vigorous both in intellect and will, quite devoid of any sense of right and wrong as applied to politics, narrowly patriotic, and (in his own way) deeply religious.

After much hesitation the King (for Frederick William had died in 1861) took Von Roon's advice, and Bismarck became his chief minister in 1862. The situation was desperate. Public opinion in Germany was strong against the innovations, and the

Parliament rejected the Budget three years running. Bismarck's plan was simple but drastic: it was to carry out the scheme, and to collect the taxes without Parliamentary sanction at all, relying on the fact that the Constitution of 1848 had made no provision for a deadlock between Crown and Parliament. He warned the King that they were playing the parts of Strafford and Charles I, and might share their fate; but both men regarded their object as worth the risk. In the end they were justified, for the opposition died away when the re-organised army began to prove its value to the power and prestige of Prussia.

1863-1864 § 165. "Papering up the Cracks."—Bismarck intended not only to oust Austria from her traditional leadership in Central Europe, but to drive her out of the German Confederation altogether. For this audacious scheme he now began to lay his plans. The Prussian Army was fast developing into a weapon of overwhelming efficiency and strength, but before it could be used against Austria it was necessary to provide against any possibility of the other Powers of Europe intervening on her behalf. To this end she must first be diplomatically isolated and then manoeuvred into such a position that she should seem to be the aggressor in the struggle. But "Prussia strikes when Prussia's hour has struck," to use one of Bismarck's own forceful metaphors, and for the time being he was quite prepared to "paper up the cracks."

An opportunity for this soon arose over the Duchies of Schleswig-Holstein, which form the "neck" of Denmark. The details of the crisis were exceedingly complicated, involving, firstly, the rights of the King of Denmark and of two or three German princes who had some claim to the succession; secondly, the fact that the Duchies were largely German in population and traditions; and thirdly, the circumstance that one of them was a member of the German Confederation, while the other was not. Bismarck fully realised their value to Prussia, for he foresaw the possibility of a canal which would give her ships a short cut between the Baltic and the North Sea; but he also realised that naked aggression would defeat its own ends. The Duchies appealed to the Federal Diet of German Princes against the Danish succession claims, but Bismarck secretly urged the King of Denmark to refuse to abide by its decisions, hinting to him that he would be supported by England in so doing. A characteristic piece of bluster by Palmerston to the effect that any Government

that attacked Denmark "would find that it was not with Denmark alone that it had to deal" (a threat which English public opinion prevented him from making good when the situation arose) lent some colour to the suggestion. But when the unfortunate King took up this defiant attitude, Bismarck seized the opportunity to pose as the vindicator of the power of the Federal Diet. A joint invasion by Prussian and Austrian forces gained a swift victory over the tiny Danish army, and by the Convention of Gastein one of the Duchies was to be administered by Austria and the other by Prussia until such time as their future could be definitely settled. It was obvious that Prussia had great geographical advantages over Austria in dealing with them, and the situation promised to provide Bismarck with an excellent opportunity of picking a quarrel with Austria on some point connected with the occupation, as soon as his preparations for striking her down should be completed. Moreover, the little war had allowed the Prussian officers to test their new organisation, and to observe the Austrian army at close quarters.

§ 166. Hapsburg and Hohenzollern.—The next step was to deprive Austria of any possible allies. Prussia had already ensured the friendly neutrality of the Czar by being the only State in Europe to support his methods of dealing with a recent Polish insurrection. Bismarck now had an interview with the Emperor Napoleon at Biarritz, and made vague suggestions as to possible "compensations" for France on the Rhine, should Prussian territory be increased as the result of an Austrian war. The French Emperor greedily swallowed the bait. Not only would this be another step towards "Les Limites Naturelles" for which his predecessors had striven in vain; an even more alluring vision danced before his eyes. He foresaw a long and devastating war between his two German neighbours which would cripple them both, and would enable him to play the attractive part of a mediator, to the great enhancement of his prestige in Europe, and to the even more valuable strengthening of his position at home. Having thus made certain of France, Bismarck next made an agreement with the King of Italy by which that monarch was to attack Austria in the rear, with a view to wresting from her the province of Venetia, of which he had been § 132 robbed by the Peace of Villafranca.

By this time the Prussian preparations were complete, and it only remained to find a suitable pretext for war. This difficulty,

June-  
July  
1865

was speedily overcome. A dispute arose about the administration of the Danish Duchies; the Austrian Emperor proposed to refer it to the Federal Diet; the King of Prussia declined to take this course until the Diet itself was reformed in accordance with a scheme which he now brought forward, involving the withdrawal of Austria from it altogether. In the Seven Weeks' War which followed, the Austrian army was utterly defeated (partly owing to the new "needle gun" with which the Prussian army was armed), the final and decisive battle being fought at Königgrätz in Bohemia. (This is sometimes called the Battle of Sadowa.)

All the calculations of the French Emperor were overthrown by the swiftness and completeness of the victory, and Prussia now pushed on the preliminaries of peace so swiftly that he was unable even to procure one of those European Conferences on which he set such store. Bismarck was too far-sighted to press so heavily on Austria as to make her a permanent enemy to Prussia; he already foresaw circumstances in which her alliance might be useful. He therefore restrained the natural desire of the army chiefs to make a triumphal entry into Vienna, and by the peace settlement which followed Austria's territorial concessions were reduced to a minimum. Italy got Venetia, despite the fact that she was heavily defeated in the only battle she fought (at Custozza, July 1865), and Austria ceased to be a member of the German Confederation; but Bismarck dropped a hint that the Emperor should seek compensation for his lost position in Central Europe by extending his south-eastern frontiers at the expense of the Balkan States. Thus began that "Drang nach Osten" which ultimately led to the Great War of 1914-18. As to Prussia herself, she proceeded to enjoy the fruits of victory by annexing Schleswig-Holstein and several of the North German states which had taken Austria's side, including Hanover and Hesse-Cassel.

1866-  
1870

§ 167. Bismarck and Napoleon III.—Thus Prussia had definitely replaced Austria as the leading German power, and her authority over all Germany north of the Main was established; but the national unity at which Bismarck aimed was still far from complete. The South German States, Bavaria, Baden, and Wurtemberg, were very jealous of Prussia, and their sympathies in the recent war had been almost wholly on the side of Austria. Liberalism and Catholicism were both

very strong in those states, and both were hostile to all that Prussia stood for—the Liberals to her militarism, and the Catholics to her aggressive Protestantism. Bismarck saw that Germany could only be united by a war in which these southern states should fight side by side with Prussia against some common foe. France was the victim at whose expense this plan could be most conveniently carried out, and Bismarck set on foot schemes similar to those which had been so successful against Austria. The first thing to be done was to guard against any possibility of the other Powers intervening on her behalf. As we know, he had already made a friend of the Czar. To Victor Emmanuel he now pointed out that a severe defeat for France would give him a splendid opportunity to seize Rome, from which he had hitherto been excluded by a French army of occupation. He gained the support of public opinion in England by disclosing the fact that § 141 Napoleon, in the course of negotiations for some “compensation” for Prussian aggrandisement, had revived the idea of annexing Belgium, the independence of which has always been a cardinal point in British policy. Finally, in order to arouse the national spirit of the South Germans, he let them know that the Emperor had, as an alternative to the Belgian proposition, suggested possible augmentations of French territory at their expense.

Nothing now remained but to find a suitable *casus belli*, which would make France seem to be the aggressor, and here again fortune favoured Bismarck. The Second Empire had long outlived its early popularity in France; Napoleon had sought to gain favour by granting constitutional reforms, but it is a common experience that nothing hastens the overthrow of a bad system of government like well-meant concessions to reform. At last it seemed to Napoleon and his supporters that the only way to bolster the Empire up would be by waging a successful war.

When two parties want to fight they will not be long in finding something to fight about. A remote relative of the King of Prussia was put forward as a candidate for the throne of Spain, which had just become vacant. Napoleon objected to this, and the Hohenzollern nominee, who was not at all eager for the uneasy crown, promptly withdrew. Bismarck had been very forward in advocating the candidature, and this result seemed to be a severe diplomatic rebuff both for him and for Prussia. But *quem Deus vult perdere, prius dementat*; the French Foreign Minister now tried to humiliate Prussia still further by demanding

that the King (who was at the moment taking the waters at Ems) should apologise for allowing his relative to become a candidate, and should give a written undertaking not to repeat such conduct for the future. This was too much, even for the mild King William; he refused to discuss the matter any further and telegraphed an account of his interview with the French Ambassador to Bismarck. The latter, after making a rapid inquiry as to the readiness of the Prussian army for war, immediately published an account of it in the papers, carefully worded so as to make the French attitude seem even more insulting than it really was. This had the desired effect. The whole German nation, South as well as North, was ablaze with indignation. Public opinion impelled the King to order the mobilisation of the Army. The French Emperor did the same, though not without some qualms of uneasiness, for he knew more than most of his bellicose courtiers about the real state of the French army. His fears were signally justified, for within six weeks the Second Empire had ceased to exist.

1870-  
1871

§ 168. **The End of One Empire and the Beginning of Another.**—The Franco-German War was won mainly by superior organisation. Von Moltke, the Chief of the General Staff, and Von Roon, the Commander-in-Chief, had planned the invasion of France with the minutest care many months in advance; and within a fortnight of the order for mobilisation every man was in his place on the frontiers, equipped down to the last buckle. The French army, on the other hand, fell far short of expectations even as to numbers, and a lack of real preparation for war was shown from the first. Worst of all, the Higher Command was honeycombed with jealousies and intrigues. Napoleon had hoped that an invasion of Southern Germany would meet with little resistance, but Bismarck had played his cards so well that the South German states responded to the call as readily as the Prussians themselves, and it was significant that the first defeats the French suffered were at the hands of the Bavarian Army, at Weissenbourg and Wörth (August 6). Soon afterwards the French army was split up by the battle of Gravelotte; half of it was shut up in the fortress of Metz under Marshal Bazaine, while the other half was cut off and utterly defeated at the battle of Sedan (September 1). It was the last battle of the Second Empire, for Napoleon himself was with the defeated army, and surrendered his sword to the Prussian King. He soon afterwards crossed to

1870

England, always the asylum for unemployed potentates, and died there a few years later.

The Germans thought that the war was now over, but in this they were deceived. The Empire had collapsed, but the French were far from accepting this as a defeat for the nation. For a time it seemed as if the great days of 1792 might come again, and the invaders be expelled by a great national rising, with Gambetta playing the part of Danton. A Republic was proclaimed and a *levée en masse* decreed. The Germans invested Paris, but the seat of Government was removed to Tours, and heroic efforts were made to reorganise the army. In October, however, Bazaine treacherously surrendered Metz to the enemy. He had tried to play for himself instead of for the nation, and had entered into negotiations with Bismarck for the future government of the country, with the natural result that he had been altogether outwitted. From that moment there was no hope for further resistance. The siege of Paris was pushed on relentlessly, and the city was forced to capitulate in January, 1871. The lesson that union is strength had been brought home to the Germans, and in the great Hall of Mirrors at Versailles the other princes formally recognised the King of Prussia as their overlord. Bismarck had triumphed, and the German Empire of his dreams was founded.

By the terms of the Peace of Frankfort France was to cede Alsace and Lorraine to Prussia, to pay an indemnity of £200,000,000, and to support an Army of Occupation till the whole of that sum was handed over. But her troubles were not over, even yet. A desperate struggle for power took place between the Commune of Paris and the interim Government which had been set up—a struggle which resembled in some ways that between the Jacobins and the Girondists eighty years before. A horrible civil war ensued, in which Paris suffered more severely than she had done at the hands of the Germans. The Government eventually succeeded in crushing the Communists, and treated them with ruthless severity. The general feeling in the country was in favour of a restoration of the Monarchy, but with three candidates for the throne in the field it seemed as if some form of republican government would divide the nation least; and this was the beginning of the Third Republic, which has already lasted much longer than any other of the round dozen or constitutions which the French have tried since the break up of the Old Regime in 1792.



## SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the careers and methods of Cavour and Bismarck as makers of Nation-States.
2. Write a short history of the Second Empire, emphasising its relations with Britain, and bring out what you consider to have been the real reasons for its downfall.
3. Was the German Empire of 1870-71 really *national*: i.e. did it include all the Germans and nothing but Germans? Explain the historical reasons for your answer.

## CHAPTER XXIX

### “ Educating our Masters ”

“ Education in its simplest form, which is one of the first and highest of human interests, is a matter in which Government initiation and direction are imperatively required; for uninstructed people will never demand it, and to appreciate education is itself a consequence of education.”—LECKY.

IN no department of human activity are the effects of the two-fold revolution at the end of the eighteenth century more marked than in the spread of popular education. The ideas of “The French Revolution” made the welfare and happiness of the individual citizen the primary object of all government; and the lack of educational facilities, which was comparatively harmless under the old social system, became positively a source of danger when “The Industrial Revolution” brought masses of population together in congested areas.

We might expect to find that Britain, the most advanced country at that epoch both in industrial and in political organisation, would also take the lead in the development of education; but we shall be disappointed. The great pioneers of educational reform of the revolutionary epoch—Rousseau, Pestalozzi, Froebel, Herbart—were none of them Englishmen, and in the provision of schools for the masses we lagged a long way behind Germany, the United States, and France. For fifty years the current doctrine of *laissez-faire* paralysed educational development, the argument being that people ought to be left to look after themselves: if they wanted education they would find a way to get it, and if they did not want it, it would be no use to them. As the century wore on, however, the fundamental falsity of this conception became more and more apparent; and the State took upon itself an ever-increasing share of responsibility for the welfare of the individual in the matter of education, as in almost every other aspect of social life.

In this chapter we shall briefly trace the steps by which this came about, and we shall see that of all the sweeping reforms undertaken by the great Ministry of 1868-74, none had more momentous consequences than the setting up of a system of national education.

1802- § 169. "The Voluntary Societies."—At the beginning of  
1833 the nineteenth century not one Englishman in eight could read and write. In some rural parishes there were little schools connected with the village church, and in a few of the towns there were endowed "Charity Schools"; but even in these the standard of teaching was incredibly bad—no person was too old or stupid or infirm to be considered fit to take charge of them. Moreover, as the industrial system developed, this very meagre provision for elementary education became more and more inadequate, especially as the children were increasingly employed in earning their living in mill or mine. Scotland was much better off than England, for the Kirk had always realised the importance of education and had established efficient little schools in most villages; but even these fell far behind the needs of the increasing population.

1778- The first real effort to grapple with the problem came from a  
1838 young Quaker named Lancaster. He got over the difficulty of providing funds to maintain teachers by the "monitorial system"—that is to say, the daily lessons which he gave to a class were handed on by the members of it to other classes. By this method  
1803 he boasted that he could "teach" a thousand pupils at once. Some prominent Nonconformists founded the "British and Foreign Schools Society" to support "Lancasterian Schools." Churchmen were alarmed at the influence the "Sects" were thus gaining over the younger generation, and in 1810 they founded "The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Church of England," with a Dr. Bell as chief organiser. The two societies gradually extended the scope of their activities, and the crudities of the monitorial system were soon outgrown; but the needs of the ever-increasing population far outstripped their resources. It became more and more apparent that if the great majority of the people were not to grow up in the grossest ignorance the Government of the country would have to take the matter up.

The Great Reform Bill paved the way for a beginning of

enlightened legislation in this direction as in so many others. In 1833 Parliament voted a subsidy to the two societies. Wherever they were prepared to raise half the cost of building a school, the Government would provide the other half, up to a grand total of £20,000. *Laissez-faire* prejudices were allayed by the fact that the Government was not to take any initiative—it merely supported the voluntary and independent enterprise of private citizens. There was no provision for expert guidance or supervision in the spending of the grant, and consequently much of it was wasted. Still, *c'est le premier pas qui coûte*—the action of the Government was an admission that it felt some sort of responsibility for education.

§ 170. The Development of State Control.—The amount of 1833-  
the grant gradually increased. By 1839 it was £30,000; but 1857  
as in this very year more than twice that sum was spent on providing new stables for Buckingham Palace, it could not be said that the Government took a disproportionately serious view of its educational duties. Several important developments now took place, however. Firstly, a special committee of the Privy Council was selected to supervise the spending of the grant, and henceforth there was always a member of the Ministry—the President of the Council—whose special function it was to direct its educational policy. Secondly, officials were now appointed to go about the country, advising and helping teachers, and reporting to the Government as to the efficiency of the schools. There were at first only two of these “ inspectors ”—one for each Society—but their appointment was a recognition of the important principle that it is the right and the duty of the Government to supervise the spending of any grants that it may make out of the public purse. Thirdly, the societies were no longer compelled to spend the whole of their grants on bricks and mortar: a certain proportion of it could be used to buy books and other necessities, and even to pay teachers’ salaries.

It is not difficult to see that this system could never give really satisfactory results. The fact that grants were only given to the two societies in proportion to their own expenditure gave the National Society a great advantage, for it had at its back all the wealth and influence of the Established Church; while the British Society depended on contributions from the Non-conformist bodies, which had to draw their resources for the building of churches and the payment of ministers from the same

pockets. Thus the Government gave the most help where it was least needed, and the children of the new industrial towns, where the Church of England had little hold, continued to grow up without any possibility of schooling.

1857-  
1870  
§ 129 § 171. "Payment by Results."—By 1857 the annual subsidy had grown to £50,000, and Lord Palmerston, who was then Prime Minister, became alarmed at this reckless expenditure of the public money which he wanted for guns and forts. He therefore appointed a Royal Commission, with the Duke of Newcastle as chairman, to inquire into the matter, and see if the grant could not be reduced. The Newcastle Commission continued its labours during the Derby-Disraeli interregnum, and by the time it presented its Report (1860), Palmerston was again at the helm of State. The Report disclosed a great deal of slackness and inefficiency in the schools, and Robert Lowe, the new Vice-President of the Council, set to work to find a drastic remedy. "I determined," he said, "that if education was not cheap it should be efficient, and if it were not efficient it should be cheap." To this end he instituted "Payment by Results": the grants made to each school (and therefore the teachers' salaries) were henceforward to be dependent on its pupils attending regularly and being able to pass an examination conducted by the inspectors. This system acted as a blight on English elementary education for many years, for it set a radically false ideal before parents, children, and teachers, by suggesting that the object of education was "cramming" children with answers to examination questions, rather than ensuring a sound and healthy development of their minds, bodies, and characters. All that can be said in favour of the Revised Code of 1861 is that it did encourage the teachers to get the children to school and impart some sort of instruction, however superficial.

1865-  
1870 § 172. Education becomes a National Question.—But all this was merely nibbling at the mountain that would have to be moved before the English could become an educated nation: it was estimated that even in 1860 barely a third of the children were attending any sort of school. The difficulties in the way of any bold step by the Government were still very great, however. The mistrust of State intervention was a long time dying, and equally tenacious of life was the prejudice against giving any education to the poor (beyond perhaps the ability to read the Bible), lest it should make them restless and discontented with

their lot. Lastly, Palmerston's conservative attitude of mind towards home politics made it very unlikely that any active steps could be taken in his lifetime.

Towards the end of the 'sixties, however, matters began to wear a new aspect. Firstly, the emergence of Prussia as a first-class military power seemed to show what the schoolmaster can do to make a nation efficient, for Prussia had developed the most elaborate system of education in Europe. Secondly, the result of the War of Secession seemed to point the same way, for education was much more under State control in the Northern States than in the Southern. Thirdly, Lord Palmerston died in 1865. Fourthly, the Reform Bill of 1867 had given the supreme power in the State to the working-class voters, and it was a mere piece of common prudence to see that they were at least able to read and write. As Robert Lowe said at the time, “ We must now set about educating our masters.”

When, therefore, Gladstone came into office in 1868 with a Ministry full of reforming energy, it was clear that one of the first problems that would have to be tackled would be the establishment of some system of national education. Several political organisations were started to support particular views as to how this ought to be done. The most famous of these was “ The Birmingham Education League,” which advocated the setting up of a complete system of Government schools wherein education should be compulsory and free, and confined to secular subjects, the religious training of the children being left to the parents.

§ 173. The Education Bill of 1870.—The new Vice-President of the Council, W. E. Forster, at once set about preparing an Education Bill, but he soon found himself in the position of the pilot faced by Scylla and Charybdis. Two alternative schemes were open to him. He might increase the subsidy paid to the voluntary societies in respect of their existing schools, and only build new ones to fill in the gaps ; or he might withdraw the grant from the voluntary societies altogether, and cover the country with a complete network of Government schools. If he adopted the former scheme, he would give mortal offence to the Dissenters, on whose votes the Liberal Government depended for much of its majority ; for the bulk of the existing schools were managed by the National Society—that is to say, by the Church of England, which would thus have increased power to instil its doctrines into the minds of the children. If, on the other hand, he adopted the

latter alternative, he exasperated the Churchmen, who, having supported their National Schools all these years, would not willingly see them starved to death by the withdrawal of the grants in order to make way for "secularist" schools under the control of the State. Moreover, this plan had the additional disadvantage that it would be much more expensive to the national exchequer.

It was probably this last argument that weighed most heavily with Forster in drawing up his Bill. He was himself in favour of a wide and complete scheme of national education, but the difficulties in the way of this were at the moment insurmountable, and his great object was to provide some sort of schooling for all English children as soon as possible. The Education Act was a typical example of English legislation in that it was a practical piece of patchwork and not an idealistic commencement *de novo*; it was not a magnificent castle in the air, but an unsymmetrical adaptation of an existing building on solid foundations. The voluntary schools were to continue, with increased support from the Government, provided that they were efficiently conducted; their teaching of secular subjects was to be under the control of the Government, but they could give what religious instruction they liked. The societies were also granted a year's grace in which to build any new schools they could raise funds for. After 1871 the Government would build schools of its own in all centres of population in which they were required, and these would be under the immediate care of locally elected School Boards, who would decide upon the religious teaching to be imparted in them. This last provision opened up a prospect of embittered religious squabbles at every election to the Boards; and it was eventually replaced by the famous Cowper-Temple Clause, which provided for undogmatic Bible teaching, to be given at either end of the school day, so that parents who objected could withdraw their children from it.

§ 174. "The Religious Question."—The political storm which arose over the Bill, both inside and outside of Parliament, shook the Government to its foundations. Gladstone himself was entirely absorbed in his Irish problems, and could give little attention to the question of Elementary Education, of which he never really grasped the importance. At one time it seemed possible that he would have to ask Forster to abandon the Bill, rather than subject the Ministry to a continuance of such bitter

attacks from its former supporters. Many Liberals exhorted the Vice-President to wait for an opportunity to institute the broadly national system which he and they desired, while others accused him of being a traitor to the cause of Nonconformity, since he had himself been brought up a Quaker. Nevertheless, he stuck to his task; as he said, the children of England were growing up savages while their rulers were wrangling. Eventually his tenacity, tact, and courage had their reward. The Bill became law in August, 1870, but it was an ominous sign for the Government that the majority in favour of it included many Conservatives, while the minority consisted largely of Liberals.

There followed a decade of rapid expansion in the control of the State over Education. Statistics had to be compiled and compared, a new “ Code ” drawn up, inspectors appointed, the plans for new school premises examined, building operations supervised, provision made for the training of the thousands of new teachers that would be required. With all these tasks Forster grappled manfully, and on the whole successfully. By 1876 there were enough schools to enable the Government to make attendance compulsory. In 1892 all school fees were abolished, and seven years later, the increasing duties of the Government in connection with them required the erection of a separate “ Board of Education ” in place of the old Committee of the Privy Council. It will be noticed that we have here only another example of the tendency to collective action and bureaucratic control which is so characteristic of the last century of our history.

§ 175. Secondary Education.—When Gladstone took office in 1868, one of his first actions was to appoint a Commission to inquire into the Endowed Schools. These “ Grammar Schools ” had mostly been founded by private benefactors centuries before—not a few directly or indirectly from the spoils of the monasteries; and many of the greatest Englishmen, including Shakespeare himself, had been educated at them. In the course of years most of them had fallen behind the times. In some cases the endowment funds had been perverted by corruption, in others by mere lethargy, in others by a change in circumstances. The “ Endowed Schools Act ” appointed three 1869 Commissioners who were to make inquiries into the conduct of each individual school, and were empowered to make such



changes in their articles of foundation as would give them a renewed vitality and efficiency.

Their subsequent development resembled that of the voluntary elementary schools: they received grants from the public funds on condition of submitting to inspection and control by the Government; and gaps were to be filled in by secondary schools established by the local authorities. The rigid uniformity of the State schools of France and Germany, where the Minister for Education can sit in his office and say, "Now every child in the land between nine and ten years of age is reading page 171 of such and such a book" has always been distasteful to British ideas, however. Provided that the schools reach a certain standard of general efficiency they are left to develop their own way, according to the needs of the district, or the views of the governing body, or the individuality of the teachers.

• Finally, we must say a word about the great development of the Public Schools. These were mostly old Grammar Schools which had, usually through the ability of some headmaster, gained such a reputation that wealthy people sent their children to them as "boarders." It was a "kill or cure" system. The boys were taught Latin and Greek by the masters, but nothing else was done for them; out of school they were left to get on as best they could. Dr. Arnold, who was headmaster of Rugby from 1829 to 1842, did much to reform them, by raising the moral and religious tone of his school and by developing the system of supervision by prefects. The great commercial prosperity of the mid-Victorian era created a new class of wealthy parents who desired to send their boys to Public Schools, and a great many new ones were founded, or old foundations remodelled, in the middle years of the century. The English Public Schools, with their Spartan virtues, their encouragement of self-dependence, their training in the exercise of authority, their limited outlook, their insistence on "good form," and their devotion to games, have had an immense influence on the development of the national character.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Illustrate from this chapter the growth of "Collectivism" in the nineteenth century.
2. Why did the Education Act of 1870 come when it did?
3. What exactly was "the Religious Question"?
4. What are the distinguishing features of education in England?

## CHAPTER XXX

### Red Coats, Blue Coats, and Black Coats

"We have not been an idle Government. . . . It has been my privilege and my duty to give the word of advance to able coadjutors and gallant and trusty adherents."—GLADSTONE, in 1873.

"They have harassed every profession, worried every interest. . . . A policy of blundering and plundering."—DISRAELI, in 1873.

AMONGST the manifold changes made during this Second Reform Era, none were more striking or more drastic than those brought about in the Services. The Army was overhauled and made a serious profession for officers and men; a new direction was given to the design and armament of warships; and the Civil Service was put on a footing appropriate to the administration of a great democracy in which the functions of government were rapidly increasing in complexity.

§ 176. *The Thin Red Line.*—For the half-century following the Battle of Waterloo the British Army remained unreformed on the strength of having won it. The strongest influence in its traditions, even after his death, was the personality of "The Duke"—the purest Tory that ever lived. Whatever the shortcomings of the British landed aristocracy which he represented, it was not militarist. Immediately after the French Wars were over, he cut the army down so drastically that there were not even sufficient troops to police the southern counties during the § 69 Labourers' Revolt; and it was the Duke himself who started the peculiarly British custom of always getting out of uniform at the first opportunity. Though he demanded (but did not always find) a high standard of efficiency in the field, he tacitly countenanced the prevailing view that the commissioned ranks were rather the occasional occupation of a gentleman than a serious profession of a highly trained expert. A proportion of the younger sons of the ruling class divided their interest in life between the

army, the hunting-field, and the gaming-tables, until the time came for them to make a rich marriage and settle down as country gentlemen.

But if the officers in the old army kept up too close a connection with the outside world, the men in the ranks had too little. They enlisted for life, and when they were eventually discharged they found that twenty-five years of musketry exercises and of forming fours in barrack squares had unfitted them to do anything else, and that there was no place for them in civil life. Naturally, it was only the dregs of the population that could tolerate such a dreary life and such dismal prospects; Wellington himself had characterised the British soldier as "the scum of the earth," who could only be kept in order by the fear of the lash. The Duke's own genius and strength of character had welded this unpromising material into a formidable force; but it had fallen into decay from disuse, and had long been hopelessly out of date as a fighting machine.

During the 'fifties and 'sixties the "we-beat-them-before-and-could-beat-them-again" attitude was gradually undermined. Firstly, the Crimean War had exposed a grotesque failure to train and equip the army for war conditions. Secondly, the  
 § 135 Indian Mutiny had proved that a larger proportion of European troops would have to be kept in India in future; and the army would have to be re-organised with this in view. Thirdly, the  
 § 129 Volunteer Movement which had been called into existence by the war-scare of 1859-61 had aroused a widespread interest in military matters amongst the general public. Lastly, the  
 § 166-177 sensational successes of the German Army between 1864 and 1870 had brought home to people the fact that great developments had taken place in the science and art of warfare during the last fifty years, and that the British Army was quite out of date both in organisation and equipment. Above all, these wars had shown both the immense value of having a big reservoir of reserves, and the best way to procure such a reservoir.

1869-1873 § 177. Cardwell at the War Office.—The Hercules to whom fell the cleansing of this Augean Stable was Edward Cardwell, who was a Peelite turned Liberal like Gladstone himself. The first thing he did was to strengthen and simplify the Government's control over the army. Hitherto energy had been dissipated and unity destroyed by the existence of several authorities with independent powers. For instance, the Militia, which in war-

time had to supply the Regular Army with reserves, was not controlled by the War Office but by the Lords Lieutenant of the counties. Worse than that, a Royal Duke was installed as Commander-in-Chief with important powers which he dispensed without consulting the Minister for War, who was responsible to the nation. The Queen stoutly upheld the traditional view that the sovereign had a personal control over the army, and it was only after a desperate struggle that Cardwell succeeded in sweeping away all these crusted anachronisms. Henceforth there was to be *one* supreme authority over the army—the Secretary of State for War, who was to be assisted and advised by *one* Army Council, on which the various departments of soldiering were to be represented by military experts.

The next step was to establish a short service system after the German model. This had been invented by Gneisenau as an evasion of Napoleon's order that the Prussian Army should not exceed 40,000 men. Relying on the fact that a man can become <sup>1808</sup> an efficient private soldier in a couple of years, he had trained relays of 40,000 men, who had then passed back into civil life until the outbreak of war should call them to the colours. Thus was created a real citizen army; and it was a very economical device, since only a small proportion of the total strength of an army was being maintained by the State at any one time—all the rest were maintaining themselves and adding to the wealth of the State by their industry. This system could only be adopted in England with considerable modifications. A feature of the British Army which is quite peculiar to it, is that each man serves about half his time on service at foreign stations, and must receive most of his training at home. This fact, together with our purely voluntary system of recruiting, makes it necessary that the period of service should be considerably longer than it is in continental armies. Cardwell took twelve years as the period of enlistment. Part of this is spent in the Reserve; the proportion varying with the different branches of the service. The duties of a driver in the Royal Army Service Corps, for instance, can be learnt in a very short time, but the expansion of numbers required at the outbreak of war is enormously greater than that required in Infantry or Cavalry. For this branch, therefore, a man spends two years with the colours and ten in the reserve, whereas in the Infantry of the Line the proportion is seven to five.

Again, whereas regiments had hitherto been known by their

numbers, under Cardwell's new scheme they were grouped in pairs, to form the first and second battalions of one regiment, which bore the territorial name of their common recruiting-area. Thus, the old "Sixty-fourth Foot" and the old "Ninety-eighth Foot" became henceforth the first and second battalions of the North Staffordshire Regiment, and so on. The idea at the back of this organisation was that one battalion should be serving abroad while the other was at the *depôt* at home, training recruits, sending out drafts of men to keep its sister-battalion at full strength, and preparing to take its turn abroad.

The most striking of Cardwell's reforms, however, was the abolition of purchase. Commissions in the British Army were bought and sold, and the War Office was almost powerless to promote deserving and able officers who could not afford to "buy their step." No other army in any country of the habitable globe or at any stage of recorded time had ever tolerated such a system. Cardwell introduced a Bill by which the nation was to buy back its own army—that is to say, the present holders of commissions were to sell them to the Government upon retiring, and the Government was henceforward to make promotion depend on merit or seniority. This Bill was rejected by the House of Lords, but Gladstone cut away the ground from beneath the feet of that assembly. The purchase of commissions had never been sanctioned by an Act of Parliament, but was carried on by the authority of a Royal Warrant issued by Queen Anne during the War of the Spanish Succession. The Prime Minister now proposed that Victoria should merely cancel Anne's warrant. The Queen agreed to this readily enough, for, little as she liked to see these dreadful Liberals tampering with her army, she was too flattered at the proposed recognition of her Royal prerogative to refuse; and the House of Lords saw the cheerless prospect of purchase being abolished without compensation. They gave way.

The last of the Cardwell reforms was the institution of annual manœuvres in which the conditions of war should be imitated as far as possible. Hitherto no officer had had a chance of handling any body of troops larger than a battalion. Henceforward the Reserves were to be called up once a year, when the auxiliary forces, such as the Medical and Service Corps, were to be put on an active service footing for a week or two. Here was a sensational novelty—the army being trained for war instead of for the parade ground.

The general result of the Cardwell reforms was almost to create a new army. The nation at large began to take a real interest in it; it ceased altogether to be "the last resource of the destitute" who "enlisted for drink" as the Duke said. Service in the ranks gradually became an honourable career upon which a young man could embark without loss to his self-respect. The officers, too, began to take a more serious interest in their profession, and a greater pride in their own efficiency.

Needless to say, all these reforms were resisted desperately by the upper classes, who had always regarded the army as their own special preserve—the navy having always had a certain middle-class tone about it. "The Service was going to the dogs," and Gladstone and his War Secretary were ruthless vandals bent on destroying the traditions of Blenheim and Waterloo. It was one of Cardwell's greatest difficulties that he got little or no support or help from the army itself, except from a little knot of enlightened officers like Wolseley.

§ 178. The Old Navy.—Unlike the army, the navy had 1816–undergone a fairly continuous development. The Senior Service, 1870 indeed, has always been more permeable to ideas, and nearer to the hearts and minds of the general public than the army.

The greatest change since the close of the French Wars was the gradual adoption of steam-power. Up to about 1840, it was only employed in what would in the old days have been called frigates—small fast vessels used for scouting. For ships of the line it was felt to be too unreliable, and the inefficient engines of those times used such enormous quantities of coal that the movements of large ships would have been restricted rather than extended by using it. Another drawback to steam-power in those days was that the paddle-wheels presented such a big target to the enemy that they could not fight broadside-on. Then screw propulsion was invented, and in 1846 it was definitely proved, by the simple method of a marine tug-o'-war, that this was much more economical of power, as well as safer from the gun-fire of the enemy.

Another important development was the use of defensive armour. During the Crimean War the engagements between the allied navies and the forts of Sebastopol had shown how great an advantage a protected fort had over an unprotected ship. In consequence of this, Napoleon III tried a few years later the experiment of bolting iron plates on a wooden ship in Toulon Harbour, and the suspicion that this was part of a sinister design

on Britain did much to foment the war-scare with which this country was afflicted at that time. It was found that the metal bolts caused the timbers of the French ship to rot, and in 1861 our own Admiralty designed the *Warrior*, built entirely of iron. The next stage in development was the result of an action between two armour-protected ships in the War of Secession. The *Merrimac* had her decks completely armoured in, while the *Monitor* had her guns in a heavily protected turret amidships. The duel itself was indecisive, but naval critics on this side of the Atlantic considered that the turret-ship was the design of the future. Much heavier guns could be mounted over a ship's keel than could be fired through the old-fashioned port-holes; and the bigger guns would give a longer range of effective fire. Then again, it was possible to protect the turret with much thicker armour than could be used on a ship's sides. There was a difficulty in the way, however. Masts and yards would much hamper the use of guns fired from a central turret, but naval opinion was not yet prepared to abandon all use of sails and trust wholly to steam for locomotion. For several years the discussion went on, and many experiments were tried. "Trial and error" is an expensive method of development. One of these experiments, the *Captain*, with turrets, a very low freeboard, and heavy rigging, went down with all her crew (and her designer) in dirty weather off Cape Finisterre. But when the Gladstone Ministry came into power the feeling was in the air that the time was ripe for adopting a new and definite policy in warship design.

§ 179. The New Navy.—The disaster to the *Captain* involved the resignation of Childers, the First Lord of the Admiralty, who had authorised her being built without the approval of his expert advisers. His successor, Goschen, began by re-organising the Admiralty on similar lines to the Army Council, and the system then laid down has lasted, with slight modifications, to the present day. The First Lord is a member of the Cabinet and a civilian, and he is assisted by a Financial Secretary to the Admiralty, who is a subordinate member of the Government. Expert guidance is afforded by a number of "Sea Lords" who are senior officers in the Royal Navy, each representing a special department, such as personnel, ships, supplies, and so forth.

The experiences of the previous decade resulted in the evolution of a new type of ship, and during the next few years the navy

was almost re-built. The most striking features of the new battleships were : firstly, that they were built of iron plates protected by a belt of steel armour ; secondly, that they were armed with a small number of big guns, with a long range and which fired a heavy projectile ; thirdly, as an almost necessary corollary of this, that mast and yards were definitely abandoned ; fourthly, that a return was made to muzzle-loading guns. This last feature was off the true line of development, for the future lay with the breech-loader ; but the earlier guns of this type had developed a disastrous habit of blowing off their breech-blocks in action. Later on (about 1880) a return had perforce to be made to breech-loading ; for the adoption of steel armour led to the use of more powerful explosives to penetrate it, and these could only be used in long-barrelled guns, which could not be withdrawn inside the turret for re-loading. Necessity is the mother of invention, and the M.L. guns gradually disappeared, though even at the end of the century there were still in commission a few old ships armed with them. Another notable development of the latter part of the century was the torpedo, which compelled designers to extend their armour below the water-line, and to provide their ships with a "secondary armament" of quick-firing guns to deal with torpedo boats.

§ 180. Downing Street and Whitehall.—The functions of Government are threefold. The Legislature makes laws, and in England it also maintains a general control over policy. This is carried out by amateurs, for even now that members are paid, their salaries are not sufficient to induce people to take up legislating as a profession. The second function is that of the judges who interpret and apply the laws, and who are of course professional lawyers. Thirdly, there is the executive function, which is to carry on the actual working of the machinery of government. It is one of England's main contributions to the art of democratic government that she has developed a system by which this is in the hands partly of amateurs and partly of professional experts. A Cabinet Minister is in charge of each of the great departments of State. He represents it in Parliament, and he guides its actions in accordance with the policy decided on in the Cabinet. He draws a salary as long as he holds the office, but his connection with his department does not as a rule last many years. Even during the life of one Administration he may be moved from office to office ; and sooner or later that Administration will be defeated



in the House, and then he will cease to function altogether. But it stands to reason that no man, however broad his understanding of the essentials of government, however quick his grasp of details, can master such a complicated piece of machinery as a Government office in a few months or even years. For all routine matters and for expert guidance and advice, he is therefore dependent on the professional members of the Civil Service, who spend their lives in one particular department. This dual system has grown up because of our ingrained dislike of being governed by officials, however expert, and because we are determined that the Parliament which we elect shall have the ultimate control over the conduct of the executive.

§ 181. Appointment by Competitive Examination.—By what system are these Civil Servants to be appointed? Obviously, it is of the utmost importance to get hold of the best possible men, since the efficient and economical working of the machinery of government depends on their ability and integrity. Yet until 1871, the sole qualification for appointment was the favour of the party in power. The dispensing of this "Patronage" amongst his political friends and supporters had always been one of the chief duties and privileges of a Cabinet Minister. Thus many of the offices had been filled by lazy and incompetent hangers-on to the ruling class. Perhaps the satire of Dickens with his "Mr. Tite Barnacle of the Circumlocution Office" in *Little Dorrit* had some effect on public opinion. Gladstone sought to bring this system to an end in the Aberdeen Cabinet in 1854, but the power of the old political families was still too firm to be easily rooted up, and he had to be content with establishing a qualifying examination which at least excluded congenital idiots from the public service. A further step was taken a few years later when, upon the government of India being overhauled after the Mutiny, it was decided that appointments to it should in future be made by a competitive examination, conducted on such lines that those who had taken good degrees at the universities should have the best chance of success.

In 1871, Gladstone took the matter up again. So great was the outcry from those classes who had hitherto looked to the "Circumlocution Office" to provide comfortable sinecures for the less capable members of their families, however, that the Prime Minister was compelled to agree to a compromise: each Minister was to choose whether his office was in future to be

recruited by competition or by patronage. Within the next few years the former method was adopted by all the departments except the Foreign Office.

The improvement in efficiency was most marked, and to-day we are justly proud of the high standard of our Civil Service in ability, in devotion to duty, and in integrity. Competitive examination is not an ideal method of selection, for it must necessarily exclude a number of able men who lack the somewhat bookish training required to be successful in it; but it may at least be claimed that it has procured better results than any other system devised up to the present.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What would be the effects of adopting Conscription in this country?
2. Trace the development of the modern battleship from the beginning of the century.
3. Trace the influence of the Duke of Wellington upon the Army.
4. What are the arguments for and against competitive examinations for the Civil Service?

## CHAPTER XXXI

### “The Gentle Art of Making Enemies”

“For the present, at least, the reformation will operate against the reformers. Nothing is more common than for men to wish, and to call loudly too, for a reformation, who when it arrives do by no means like the severity of its aspect. Reformation is one of those pieces which must be put at a distance in order to please. Its greatest favourers love it better in the abstract than in the concrete.”—BURKE.

Introduction.—Towards the end of Gladstone’s first Ministry, the leader of the Opposition likened the Treasury Bench to a range of exhausted volcanoes. In a way, Disraeli’s sarcastic simile was a compliment to the Liberals—they had at any rate done something with the mandate they had received from the electorate in 1868. But every reform that a Ministry carries through causes it to lose a certain amount of favour with some section or other of the public. For instance, we have already seen how the disestablishment of the Irish Church offended Churchmen, while the Education Bill offended Nonconformists, and the reforms of the Army and Civil Service offended the ruling classes generally. If any public support was gained from these measures, it was infinitesimally small compared with the amount that was lost. This “swing of the pendulum” is a common  
§ 52 feature in English politics—we have already seen a striking example in the Whig collapse in the ’thirties; but the bold and sweeping and rapid changes which this Liberal Ministry had introduced in every aspect of social and political life had made the nation almost breathless, and there was a general feeling that the time had come to “rest and be thankful.”

It is with the last stages of this decline and fall that this chapter will deal.

1871– § 182. A New Force in Politics : “Mr. Bung.”—Hitherto  
1872 the national Government had exercised very little control over

the sale of alcoholic liquors. Public-houses had to be licensed by the local justices of the peace, but the hours during which they remained open were practically at the discretion of the publican. It is significant that an Act passed in 1839 which closed beerhouses between midnight on Saturdays and midday on Sundays was said to have “a wonderful effect on public order.” Horrible scenes of drunkenness occurred daily and nightly in every industrial district, and eighty per cent. of the crime of the whole country was ascribed by those best qualified to judge to strong drink. In 1853 a movement to restrict, and ultimately to abolish, the sale of alcoholic beverages was set on foot by the United Kingdom Alliance. How much the temperance movement has done since then to raise public opinion on the subject may be seen from one little piece of indirect evidence. In *The Pickwick Papers* Dickens makes his Nonconformist minister, Mr. Stiggins, a besotted dram-drinker, open and unashamed; to-day, no person who was habitually the worse for liquor could long remain priest or presbyter of any denomination—least of all, perhaps, in a Nonconformist Church.

With characteristic energy the Gladstone Ministry set about bringing public-houses under strict control. This was another nail driven into the coffin of *laissez-faire*—and also one into their own. The Home Secretary, H. A. Bruce, brought in a 1871 Licensing Bill which would have closed many public-houses altogether and have restricted the hours of opening of the others. The wealthy brewing firms, who themselves owned most of the public-houses, raised a furious opposition at this curtailment of their liberty to conduct their own business their own way. If the temperance agitators had counterbalanced this attack on the Bill by an equally enthusiastic defence of it, it is quite possible that it might have become law; but they were dissatisfied with it because it did not bring into force the extreme remedy which they themselves advocated—a “Local Option Veto,” by which a majority of the citizens of any district could close all the public-houses in it. Not being content with half a loaf, the U.K. Alliance had to go without any bread at all, for Bruce had to withdraw his Bill in consequence of the bitter attack of the brewing interests in the House. The following year he brought in a much milder Bill, which merely fixed a closing hour of 1873 eleven o’clock and forbade the sale of liquor before midday on Sundays. This was duly passed into law.

The whole incident is a good example of how a well-intentioned ministry can make enemies. The temperance reformers were disgusted that the Government had done so little for their cause, and the brewing interest (which includes not only the employees of the industry, but also the hundreds of thousands of private persons who hold brewery shares) never forgot or forgave the Bill of 1871 or the Act of 1872. Henceforth the whole of their wealth and influence was used against the Liberals at election times.

§ 183. Another New Force in Politics : The Trade Unions.

—The legislation of 1824–25 made it possible for working men to form combinations to improve their wages and conditions of labour, but these combinations still suffered under many disadvantages. They could deal collectively with employers, and they could collectively refuse to work ; but the law did not protect their funds—a dishonest treasurer could rob them with impunity—and they might not “ persuade ” their fellow workmen to carry out a strike, let alone “ picket ” the approach to a factory. Since then the Trade Union movement had gone through several phases. Robert Owen had made an abortive attempt to organise a “ general strike ” in 1835, and almost all the subsequent sectional strikes had resulted in starvation for the strikers. Employers waged war on the unions by “ presenting the document ”—that is to say, refusing to employ any workman who was a member of one. The movement ebbed, but it never quite dried up. With the collapse of Chartism, which had absorbed so much of the energies of reformers, and with the gradual expansion of commercial prosperity in the 'fifties, the Trade Unions took a new lease of life. The new leaders, men like William Allen, Robert Applegarth, and George Odger, gave the movement a sound, steady, constitutional tone ; they deprecated violent methods, and encouraged thrift and self-respect amongst their members.

Then came the Reform Bill of 1867. The mechanics and workmen who formed the backbone of the Trade Unions were just the class that was enfranchised by that measure. We have seen how great an ascendancy Gladstone had gained over them and how they used their newly-won vote to put him in power in 1868. They now naturally looked to the Liberals to do something for them in return, and particularly to relieve the unions of the difficulties in which they were placed by the Act of 1825,

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Disappointment awaited them, however. Parliamentary reform had done little to alter the general character of the House of Commons; it still consisted mainly of members of what may be called the “employer class”—of persons whose incomes were derived from shares in industrial concerns. The Trade Union Act now passed (1871) was very far indeed from satisfying the demands of the Trade Union leaders. The unions were to be registered (more bureaucracy!) and their property was to be protected in the same way as that of any other lawful association of persons. “Persuasion” was permitted, but the law remained strong as ever against picketing; even a single person could be punished for “watching and besetting” a factory or workshop with intent to discourage strike-breaking.

Naturally, the unions were very angry; and equally naturally they vented their anger at the next General Election. Once more had the Government laid up a store of trouble for itself by well-meant attempts at reform.

§ 184. The Ballot Act.—In 1872 the Government put through an Act to make the casting of votes at elections secret. Hitherto each elector had been obliged to declare openly which candidate he voted for; by the Ballot Act he recorded his vote by placing a cross on a slip of paper opposite to the name of the candidate whom he wished to support. Provision was to be made for him to do this without being overlooked, and if he showed the marked ballot-paper to anybody at the polling station it was not to be accepted by the returning officer. Thus both intimidation and bribery were discouraged. No voter could be influenced by fear of reprisals, direct or indirect, from a candidate’s supporters; and no candidate would be likely to bribe an elector when he could not be sure that he got value for his money.

This measure, again, did the Government a good deal of harm, even with their own supporters. The old-fashioned Whigs considered that it was “pandering to the lower classes,” and the philosophical Radicals that it was “sapping the manly independence of the electors.” Nor was this the only loss that the Liberals suffered from it. Some people supposed that Gladstone put through the Ballot Act in order to prevent Liberals from being intimidated by their Conservative employers and landlords, and to deprive his opponents of the opportunities for corruption which their superior wealth gave them. Whatever may be the truth as to this, the result at the next General Election

was not at all on those lines. Many Liberals, who were offended with one or other of the Government's reforms, took advantage of the secret ballot to wreak their vengeance on the leaders of the party without having to make a humiliating confession of apostasy. And another indirect effect of the Ballot Act was to enable the Irish peasant to return extreme "Nationalists" to Parliament.

There is no doubt, however, that the Act fulfilled its main objects. Any intimidation that went on in the future had perforce to be of a very attenuated kind; while bribery began to assume such sublimated forms as distributions of blankets and coals, and subscriptions to cricket clubs. And whatever objections were raised to it in 1872, nobody has ever dreamed of repealing it.

§ 185. Gladstonian Foreign Policy : "Safety First."—No aspect of Gladstone's work as a statesman comes in for so much adverse criticism as his conduct of foreign affairs. It was not always easy to suggest alternative lines of policy, but there was a general feeling that under his regime the Union Jack did not flaunt quite so proudly in the breeze as it had done in "Pam's" time, for instance. Disraeli and his followers had many opportunities of accusing him of lowering British prestige in the eyes of the world. "Chauvinism" was a new line for the Conservatives. For many years their rôle in Parliament had been to deprecate the bellicose trumpetings of Lord Palmerston. But it was a particularly easy and popular line of attack, and they made the most of it. A brief review of the two most important crises in foreign affairs during these six years of Liberal rule will give us some idea of the basis for these criticisms.

The first was the Franco-German War. The English Foreign Office was so completely taken by surprise by it that it could not gather its wits together in time to make any attempt at mediation. All that it could do was to carry on the traditional British policy of securing the neutrality of Belgium. Each of the belligerents was induced to give an undertaking to keep its forces off the soil of that country, and England threatened that any breach of this would be regarded as "an unfriendly act" towards herself. British prejudices were at first on the side of Germany, owing to our distrust of Napoleon III, and our well-grounded suspicion that he intended to annex Belgium if he got the chance. But after the Empire had fallen, and the Germans had extorted

Alsace-Lorraine and an enormous indemnity from the struggling § 168 young Republic, there was a general turn over of sympathy towards the defeated party. This feeling did not, could not, lead to any active support, however. Nobody could seriously suggest that we should intervene in a contest in which we had not the remotest direct concern, especially as our army—negligible at the best of times when compared with the great masses of men engaged in this war—was now in the midst of the process of reconstruction; but there was an uneasy feeling that the part of § 177 a passive spectator to a war of such magnitude was not altogether worthy of us. This feeling was intensified, moreover, by the fact that Russia took the opportunity to repudiate her agreement not to keep warships in the Black Sea. Palmerston had prolonged the Crimean War for six months in order to wring this concession § 124 out of the Czar: it was humiliating to have to admit that this great sacrifice of men and money had been made in vain. But what could the Government do? Our old ally against Russia was *hors de combat*. Were we to make war on the Russian Empire single-handed in order to maintain the last remnant of a treaty after all its other provisions had already crumbled away? Such a course would have been a piece of criminal folly. And yet—it could not be denied that Britain cut rather a sorry figure in the affair.

Contemporary with these events was the humiliation over the *Alabama* claims. The American Government had always strongly resented our attitude of rather too friendly neutrality towards the seceding States; but when it came to turning a blind eye to the building of a Confederate war fleet in British shipyards, § 146 they had a legitimate grievance. This grievance was assiduously nursed by certain factions in American politics, even after the war was over. The claim was made that, according to the principles of international law, the British Government was financially responsible for all the damage done to the property of American subjects by the *Alabama* and her consorts. The dispute became very heated, and there were moments when it seemed as if an open quarrel would come of it.

Gladstone, as soon as he took office, determined upon a bold but unpopular step: he contrived that the whole matter should be submitted to arbitration. He had considerable difficulty in getting the American Government to agree to take this course, and even more in inducing his own colleagues to support it. At



last, however, the Washington Convention was signed, and during 1872 an International Court of Arbitration—the first such Court in history—spent a pleasant summer at Geneva. The Court consisted of one representative each from the United States, Great Britain, Brazil, Italy, and Switzerland. The American Government at first put forward a preposterous claim that, as England had encouraged the Southern States to prolong their resistance, she was liable for the whole cost of the last two years of the war. The American representative was Charles Francis Adams, who had been Ambassador to England during the war, when both nations owed much to his wisdom and moderation. He now ruled out the “indirect claims” from the start—fully realising that they were merely intended to wreck the whole plan for arbitration, since England could never have admitted them. Ultimately the Court decided that England must pay about eleven millions sterling. This was a very large sum—after all the claims of American citizens had been fully met there was a handsome surplus which remains unspent to this day—but it was a bagatelle compared with the cost of a war, even in material wealth. Thus Gladstone’s policy was amply justified from every point of view, and he set a most valuable example to succeeding generations of the way to settle international disputes. And yet—once more there was a scarcely formulated feeling in the air that it was inglorious to settle our disputes with our neighbours by talking and paying instead of by fighting them in the good old-fashioned way!

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1873–  
1874

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§ 186. The Decline and Fall of the Liberals.—Thus the power of the Liberal Government, which had entered upon its reforming career in 1868 so full of buoyant zeal and energy, crumbled away steadily in the years that followed, until by 1873 it was tottering to its fall. The disaffection in the country began to be reflected within the Cabinet itself. Gladstone’s own thirst for putting everybody and everything right was unquenchable, but it became more and more apparent that he could no longer count on the hearty support of his own followers. When he brought before the House his Bill for providing Ireland with a new University system, the hostile majority by which it was defeated included many who had formerly been his warmest supporters, and he forthwith tendered his resignation to the Queen.

But his rival declined to take office. Disraeli felt that the

Conservative reaction had not gone far enough. The flowing tide was with him; if he held back a little longer, and forced the Liberals to flounder along for another twelvemonth amid growing unpopularity and widening divisions within their own ranks, he would be swept into office with irresistible strength. The time was not yet quite ripe for a dissolution, and he had no mind to take office with a House containing a Liberal majority which would forthwith reunite and harass his every movement—he had had plenty of that sort of thing in the past. The § 128, next time he held office he intended to hold real power as well. 151

The end came with startling suddenness. An unconstitutional action on the part of the Postmaster-General was brought to light. It seemed that the money to pay for an extension of the telegraphs had not been drawn by an Appropriation Bill in the regular way, but had been deducted from the revenue without reaching the Treasury at all. There was no question of corruption, or of personal dishonesty; but Parliament was naturally and justly indignant that its control over the national expenditure should be weakened or evaded. The Postmaster-General had to disappear into private life, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Sir Robert Lowe, who had connived at the irregularity, was also involved in the scandal. It might not be necessary for him to retire from the Cabinet altogether, but it would be impossible for him to retain his present office—in which, indeed, he had never been an unequivocal success. Out of this unpromising situation Gladstone determined to wring an advantage which would rehabilitate his party in the public favour. He announced that Lowe would go to the Home Office, while he would himself take over the Chancellorship of the Exchequer, in which he had won such triumphs in the past. Moreover, he foreshadowed the boldest financial scheme which even he had ever conceived. He would fulfil the pledge which he had made twenty years before, but which had been suspended by the Crimean War and the Indian Mutiny: he would abolish the income tax. But nothing § 117 could avert the fate which was in store for the Government. In order to reduce taxation, it was necessary also to reduce expenditure, and Gladstone desired the spending departments—particularly the War Office and the Admiralty—to reduce their estimates. The Ministers concerned stated in the Cabinet that they would not feel justified in doing this until a General Election;

had given the nation a chance to express its views on the subject. Then, suddenly, without a word of warning, Gladstone dissolved the Parliament, in the midst of the Christmas vacation.

His followers in the House were almost mutinous at being pitchforked into an election just when they had made all their arrangements for another session, and they only went in to the fight half-heartedly. All the pent-up animosities which had been aroused by recent legislation now found a vent. The Army officers, the Civil Servants, the Churchmen, the Nonconformists, the brewery shareholders, the Trade Unionists—they all voted “early and often” against the Government. They were not to be bribed even by the proposal about the income tax. The result was a Conservative victory the magnitude of which surprised even “Dizzy” himself.

Nor was even this the end of the woes of the unfortunate Liberals. Gladstone, aggrieved at the dissensions in the party and in the Cabinet, announced his retirement from the leadership. He was now sixty-five years old, and he intended to spend the scanty remainder of his days in rest and reflection and preparation for his latter end. When we consider how great a place he filled in the next twenty years of English political life, how full those years were of his words and works, we cannot forbear a smile at this somewhat premature abdication. But Lord Hartington, on whom fell the reversion of the leadership, had a particularly thankless task, with a party all sixes and sevens, and in the not very distant background a retired leader who was always liable to come rushing back into the fray in the most disconcerting manner.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain briefly the grievances felt in 1874 against the Government by (a) the Army officers; (b) the Civil Servants; (c) the Anglican clergy; (d) the Nonconformists; (e) brewery shareholders; (f) trade unionists.
2. Write an essay on National Finance, explaining the allusion to § 186.
3. What improvements can you suggest in the Foreign Policy of the Ministry.
4. What is meant by “The Swing of the Pendulum”? Illustrate from history since 1830.

## CHAPTER XXXII

### “Tory Democracy”

“If there be a change,” said Sybil, “it is because in some degree the People have learnt their strength.”

“Ah! dismiss from your mind those fallacious fancies,” said Egremont. “The People are not strong; they never can be strong. Their attempts at self-vindication can only end in their suffering and confusion. . . . The new generation of the aristocracy of England are not tyrants, not oppressors, Sybil, as you persist in believing. Their intelligence, better than that, their hearts, are open to the responsibilities of their position. . . . Their sympathies are awakened; time and thought will bring the rest. They are the natural leaders of the People, Sybil; believe me, they are the only ones.”—DISRAELI, *Sybil*.

THE six years of the First Gladstone Ministry were followed by a period of the same length which formed the climax to the truly marvellous career of his rival Disraeli.

A member of a despised race, with no family connections in the political world, showing traces of charlatanry in his demeanour which were very unacceptable to the well-bred class which still dominated Parliament, he had gradually overcome all these obstacles, and had made himself the undisputed head of the party which included most of the landed aristocracy of Britain. He had proved himself the greatest leader of Opposition in the history of Parliament. His political sagacity and brilliant debating powers had pulled the Conservative Party together after the thirty years during which they had enjoyed but three short spells of office. At last the combination of patience, courage, and tact with which he had built up his party during those long years of the “hope deferred that maketh the heart sick” was to have its reward. He was Prime Minister with a compact majority of devoted followers, a very capable Cabinet, a demoralised Opposition, and a Sovereign who bestowed on him her highest personal favour. His ability as a critic of other men’s measures had been amply demonstrated: he had now an opportunity to show what he could do as a constructive statesman.

§ 187. The New Conservatism.—After the great schism over the Corn Laws in 1846, most of the ablest Conservatives had followed Peel, and had gradually been absorbed into the Liberal Party—one of them, indeed, was now its leader. What the residue of the Tory Party needed most, if they were ever to become an active force in politics again, was a definite and positive programme. Mere hankering after their lost Corn Laws would never get them back into power and place, for the nation had shown in unequivocal fashion that it had no intention of reverting to Protection. But party principles are plants of very slow growth, and it took Disraeli a quarter of a century to build up a coherent policy, and to educate his followers into accepting it.

1844 In his younger days he had been the guiding spirit of a movement which he called "Young England"; and two of his most brilliant political novels (*Coningsby* and *Sybil*) had been written to expound its aims. It was a revolt against the bourgeois control of politics which was such a marked characteristic of the middle decades of the century, and it sought to substitute the aristocracy for the middle class as the leaders and spokesmen of the people. "Young England" did not have a very long or influential existence as a political party; but its ideals lived on in Disraeli's mind, and gradually took shape in that form of democratic Conservatism which he was now able to bring into active play.

There were four main planks in its "platform." The first was the maintenance of the Constitution; the second was the upholding of the prestige of Britain in the eyes of the rest of the world; the third was the promotion of Imperial unity; and the fourth was the passing of social reforms that would benefit the working class. It is not easy to see at first glance any very broad distinction between these principles and those of Gladstone. No one could be more intensely loyal to the Monarchy than he, nor a more fervid upholder of the State Church. He had never carried any alteration in the institutions of the country half so sweeping as Disraeli's Reform Bill of 1867. Nor would he ever have declared himself in favour of the disintegration of the Empire, or the humbling of the country in the eyes of foreigners. The fact is that there was less real difference in the general aims of the two parties than those engaged in the heat and dust of the political conflict realised. The distinction really lay in the

interpretation which they put upon principles which were common to both. The Liberals were in general more determined than the Conservatives that the House of Commons should be the controlling factor in the Constitution. The Conservatives were more disposed to interference with the Colonies, while the Liberals were inclined to leave them alone to work out their own salvation in their own way. In Foreign Policy, again, the Liberals were disposed to "let well alone," while the Conservatives were more eager that Britain should play a prominent part in European affairs. With respect to domestic reform, on the other hand, it was the Liberals that tended to be bold and sweeping, while the Conservatives were content to deal with matters piecemeal. But it was all a matter of degree and proportion.

§ 188. Social Reform.—Most of Disraeli's Cabinet were men who had already made their mark in politics, but in appointing Richard Cross, a Lancashire business man, to be his Home Secretary he made what seemed in those days a bold and hazardous experiment. It was highly successful. Every cricketer is familiar with instances of the last man chosen for a team being the success of the side, and a parallel phenomenon was now seen in the political world. Cross was responsible for most of the legislation which fulfilled Disraeli's election promise of "social reform," and several of the measures which he drew up and piloted through Parliament were of great permanent value.

For instance, the Artisans' Dwelling Act was the first attempt by any British Government to abolish slums and to provide decent dwellings for the poor. Every Town Council was henceforth required to appoint a Medical Officer of Health, and was empowered to buy up insanitary house-property at its market value, to demolish it and to substitute healthy buildings, which could be let at a low rental to working men. It will be noticed how completely our legislators had dropped the *laissez-faire* doctrine, and how continuous was the development of bureaucracy. Hardly a year passed without some new Act to regulate the lives and actions of citizens, and to provide for the appointment of officials to carry these regulations out.

Another very valuable step in safeguarding the health and happiness of the people was the Enclosure of Commons Act, 1876 which made it almost impossible henceforward for landowners to absorb public land into their estates. As Cross himself put it, "What the people of this country want almost as much as they

want food is the air which they breathe and the health which they enjoy."

Again, the law as to Trade Unions was put on a better footing. Gladstone's Trade Union Act of 1871 had done something in this direction, but it left many restrictions which the working class felt to be unjust. The "Employers and Workmen Act" laid it down firstly that a union could not be prosecuted for any act that would not be illegal if done by an individual, and secondly, that workmen could induce their comrades to carry out a "strike" by any methods short of actual threats or violence. Obviously, public opinion had made a great advance towards democratic equality before the law since 1825.

Lastly, there was passed an important "Factory and Workshop Act." Since the first great Factory Act of 1833 a great deal of supplementary legislation on the subject had been carried through from time to time. Special Acts protected different classes of workers and regulated different aspects of their welfare. Much confusion had resulted from the multiplicity of these provisions, and Cross now revised and consolidated them in a consistent scheme for the regulation of hours and conditions of labour. Among other restrictions, children under ten could not henceforth be employed at all; those between ten and fourteen not for more than half the working day, and women not for more than fifty-six hours a week. Lord Shaftesbury, who was nearing the end of a long life devoted to this cause, declared that "two millions of people would bless the day when Mr. Cross was asked to be Secretary of State for the Home Department."

§ 189. "The Plimsoll Mark."—Besides these four reforms for which the Government was directly responsible, a fifth was forced upon them by the persistence of one private member. Samuel Plimsoll, M.P. for Derby, had for some years taken up the cause of the sailors of the Mercantile Marine, who were often obliged to risk their lives in overloaded and unseaworthy ships which the first "capful of wind" would send to the bottom. It was quite possible for owners to over-insure both ship and cargo, and they thus sometimes stood to make pecuniary gain by sacrificing the lives of others. Plimsoll induced Disraeli's Ministry to appoint a Commission to inquire into the matter, and this Commission reported in 1875 in favour of a Bill being brought in to deal with the evil. Unfortunately the session was already

fully occupied with the Government's own business, and the Prime Minister announced that the matter would have to stand over till the following year. Plimsoll felt that this was merely the prelude to his cause being abandoned altogether; and he did something for which "Merchant Jack" had reason to be profoundly thankful—he lost his temper. He so far forgot the rules and amenities of the House as to stand in the middle of the floor, to apostrophise the members as "murderers," and to suggest that they were in league with the shipowners. A week later he returned and apologised for his outburst, but he found that unparliamentary conduct had achieved more than many months of patient constitutional methods, for it had aroused the interest of the House. A temporary Act was rushed through until the matter could be properly dealt with. The following Session regulations were made to prevent unseaworthy ships from putting to sea, and to place the details under the care of the Board of Trade (more interference with the individual and more bureaucracy!). To this day the line on a ship's side which shows how low in the water she may be when fully loaded is called "The Plimsoll Mark."

§ 190. "England is an Asiatic Power."—In all this legisla- 1875-  
tion "Dizzy" himself played but a minor part. His own con- 1878  
tributions to the work of Government were in the general direction of foreign and colonial policy rather than in the thorny and laborious path of social reform. It was the maintenance of British power in India, above all, that engaged his attention. With the single exception of an ill-starred attempt to extend and unite the South African colonies, all his more important strokes of policy were connected directly or indirectly with Indian affairs.

Firstly, in the winter of 1875-76 the Prince of Wales was sent thither on a visit. This was the first time that any Royal Personage had visited any part of the trans-oceanic empire, and his tour admirably served its purpose of calling forth demonstrations of enthusiasm for British rule.

Then, in 1876, the Government bought up the Suez Canal shares that had hitherto belonged to the Khedive of Egypt. This was far more than an excellent business speculation; it was designed to obtain a preponderating share in the control of what had now become our great ocean highway to the East.

The following year the Prime Minister induced Parliament to pass an Act giving the Queen the title of "Empress of India."



The object of this was to give the Sovereign a definite standing in the eyes of the natives as a supreme ruler over rulers, for the idea of a constitutional head of a Limited Monarchy was something quite outside the range of their experience. The proposal came in for much adverse criticism, for the imperial title had become a good deal tarnished by the career of Napoleon III, and by the fate of his puppet the unfortunate "Emperor of Mexico." The opposition wore down, however, and the ultimate effect of the change was all that its author had anticipated.

A fourth example of Disraeli's pre-occupation with Indian affairs was his appointment of Lord Lytton (the son of the famous novelist) to be Viceroy, with the express task of strengthening our hold over the most vulnerable point in the defences of India —the passes through the North-West. The episode which followed bore a painful resemblance to that which occurred soon after the Queen's accession. The fear of Russian influence in Afghanistan was once again the mainspring of British policy. Ignoring the urgent advice of Lord Lawrence, who knew more about conditions in that part of the world than any other living European, the Indian Government compelled the Amir to receive a British envoy, who was to keep in check the machinations of Russia in Afghanistan. After a month or two the Envoy was murdered in Kabul with all his party by the mutinous Afghan army, and a punitive expedition had to be sent to conquer the country. This was duly carried out by Sir Frederick Roberts, who in the course of the campaign made his famous march from Kabul to Kandahar. But it was clear that the policy of interference in Afghanistan would require a powerful garrison permanently stationed there—a perpetual source of expense and of friction with the Czar. Gladstone, who had by this time succeeded Disraeli in office, had therefore no option but to revert to the former plan of making Afghanistan a friendly but independent buffer-state, and such it has remained ever since.

§ 191. The Eastern Question again. — Lastly, it was Disraeli's concern for British interests in India that led him into the most striking episode of his whole career—his intervention in the Russo-Turkish war of 1877-78.

§ 125 Lord Aberdeen's prophecy that the Peace of Paris would not last more than twenty years was justified by the event. Turkey made not the slightest pretence of observing her treaty obligations towards her Christian subjects, and during the summer of 1876

The Balkan nations had revolted against her barbarous misrule. The Sultan was in his usual financial difficulties, and he did not find it at all easy to overcome the armed forces of the rebels ; but among the helpless peasantry of the Bulgarian mountains his Bashi-Bazouks slaughtered and mutilated without respect for age and sex. The tale of these horrors stirred the public conscience of Europe, and in Britain the feeling was fanned into a flame by the eloquence of Gladstone, who was drawn out of his retirement by the familiar call of the oppressed nationalities of Europe. He had himself shared the responsibility for the bolstering up of the Sultan by the Crimean War, but he made ample amends for it now. Disraeli, on the other hand, carried on the Palmerstonian tradition in his Near Eastern policy. He was convinced that Russia had sinister designs on India, and felt that to check the restless ambitions of the Czar was Britain's first duty to herself and to Europe generally. Above all, Russia must be prevented from gaining the power and prestige which a successful intervention in the Balkans would give her. If her influence became paramount in South-Eastern Europe she might succeed in cutting us off from our Asiatic possessions altogether. Thus Britain found herself once more in the strange position of maintaining an obsolete and semi-savage tyranny of Mohammedan rulers over Christian populations.

The Prime Minister's attitude appealed to one of the fundamental passions of human nature, and he was enthusiastically supported by large and influential sections of public opinion. His refusal of an invitation from Russia to the other Great Powers to join in intervening between the Sultan and his rebels caused the project to fall through. Thereupon the Czar said that he would act alone ; but when he declared war on Turkey in May, 1877, a British fleet and army began to mobilise in the Mediterranean, and we seemed to be on the verge of joining ; “our old ally.” Gladstone found plenty of support for his resistance to the war-fever in the industrial districts of the North, but the London mob broke his windows and threatened him with personal violence. A popular music-hall song of the day asseverated that

“We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,

We've got the men, we've got the ships, we've got the money too.”

The bulk of the Liberal Party went with the stream, and its pusillanimity brought on it a stinging sarcasm from “Dizzy”:

"You will never be in a majority if you are so very delicate. You must assert your opinions without fear and with perseverance, and if they are just and true and right you will ultimately be supported by the country." Nearly all the newspapers were on the same side. As for the Queen, nothing could exceed her war-like fury. "Oh, if the Queen were a man, *how* she would like to go and give those Russians, whose word one cannot believe, such a beating! We shall never be friends again until we have it out—this the Queen is sure of."

Disraeli (who became Earl of Beaconsfield in 1878) was not in the least carried away by this wave of "Jingoism"; but he made use of it for his own ends. As in 1854, the Turks had been encouraged to resist by their hope of British support. They were severely defeated in the field, but the Czar's anxiety as to the attitude of England made him stop short of entering Constantinople and come to terms with his adversary quickly; hence the Treaty of San Stephano, by which the Balkan states were to become independent of the Sultan. At this stage Beaconsfield intervened. He pointed out to the Czar that these matters had been settled by a conference of the Great Powers in 1856, and that any alteration in the Treaty of Paris could only be made with the consent of them all. Not only the Czar, but also the other potentates of Europe were impressed by the fact that Britain appeared to know what she wanted, and to have every intention of getting it. Thus Beaconsfield was able to bring about the famous Congress of Berlin, which was presided over by Bismarck, and attended on behalf of Great Britain by himself and Lord Salisbury.

§ 192. Peace with Honour.—When Beaconsfield returned to England after the Congress, saying that he brought back "peace with honour," he was greeted with rapturous enthusiasm, as if he had gained a great diplomatic triumph, and his delighted Mistress rewarded him with the Garter. He certainly had been the most influential member of the Congress, and its most picturesque personality, but his actual achievements there did not amount to very much. His great aim had been to restrict the establishment of independent states in the Balkan Peninsula, because he feared that these, being Slavic in race and of the Greek Church in religion, would be merely the catspaws of Russia. In this he succeeded, but neither in its immediate effects nor in its ultimate objects did the Berlin Treaty further British interests.

He had caused a great part of Bulgaria to be thrust back under the rule of the Sultan, but the “Big Bulgaria” which he dreaded came into existence after all in 1885, with the full approval of Lord Salisbury and everybody else. Again, Disraeli’s tenderness for the Sultan’s feelings led him to reject Bismarck’s suggestion that Britain should annex Egypt; but he accepted Cyprus, which has never been the least use to us. Lastly, his demand that Bosnia should be administered by Austria was a deliberate attempt to interest the Central Powers in the Balkans, so that they should act as a counterpoise to Russian ambitions in that quarter. How false a step this was only became apparent many years later in the course of events which led to the Great War.

Altogether there was much justification for Salisbury’s candid confession some years later, that “we had backed the wrong horse” throughout the whole affair.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Exemplify (a) the distinction, and (b) the similarity, between Liberals and Conservatives, suggested in Section 188.
2. Trace the rise of bureaucratic methods of government, 1832-1880.
3. Show how far Disraeli carried on the Palmerstonian tradition in Foreign Policy.

## CHAPTER XXXIII

### The Ministry of all the Troubles

"Politics are not a drama whose scenes follow one another according to a methodical plan; politics are a conflict of which chance is incessantly modifying the whole course."—A. SOREL.

THE last chapter closed with Lord Beaconsfield on the crest of the wave. "Peace with Honour" had brought him enthusiastic manifestations of popularity, the high favour of the Queen, and the Order of the Garter. People sometimes wonder why he did not seize this favourable moment to dissolve Parliament, and so gain a renewal of his power; but it would have been an unheard-of piece of sharp practice for a Prime Minister to dissolve a Parliament which is steadily supporting him, halfway through its normal course, in order to snatch a party advantage; and it is not at all certain that the jubilation of the London mob, or even the congratulations of the London Press, represented the solid opinion of the nation as a whole, especially that portion of it that lived in the industrial districts of the North and Midlands, where Gladstone held such sway over men's hearts and minds.

However this may be, the events of the next two years were not at all favourable to the Government's adventures in "imperialism," and Gladstone repeatedly came out of his retirement to arouse the country to a sense of his opponents' iniquities. The General Election of 1880 resulted in a sweeping victory for Liberalism, and Gladstone returned to office with a Cabinet which contained more able men than any other in our annals. But this new "Ministry of All the Talents" was from the first dogged by misfortunes which were aggravated by its own lack of essential unity. It was like a football team in which players of great ability fail to play together as a team, and all seem to have an "off-day" simultaneously. It had a disastrous season, as we shall see in the course of the next three chapters.

Our immediate object is to trace the general outline of these events, reserving for special treatment a consideration of the two most conspicuous difficulties of the Liberals—those connected with Egypt and with Ireland.

§ 193. "Imperialism" in South Africa.—We saw in the last chapter how Disraeli's "forward policy" in India—designed to protect our dominion from Russian aggression, and put into operation by his personal friend Lord Lytton—led to an ill-fated attempt to get control of Afghanistan. Hardly more fortunate was the manifestation of the new imperialism in South Africa. 1877-1879

In the 'fifties the British Government had determined on a policy of *laissez-faire* with regard to these settlements. The Dutch colonies had been granted complete independence by the Conventions of 1852 and 1854; Cape Colony was given self-government in 1858; and although Natal remained a Crown Colony, it was left to shift for itself with very little interference from Whitehall. Sir George Grey, who had been so successful as an administrator in Australasia, put forward a scheme for a federation of the four colonies, but the Governments both of Derby and Palmerston were unwilling to undertake any new responsibilities, especially on behalf of alien Afrianders, and his plan was rejected. § 85

As time went on, however, it became ever clearer that this policy of "letting well alone" would ultimately lead to the extinction of both the white races in South Africa. The Dutch Republics were so sparsely populated and so loosely organised that they had the utmost difficulty in beating off the attacks of the warlike native tribes which surrounded them. In 1872 the Zulus began to make active preparations for war under their vigorous new king, the famous Cetewayo. Unless defensive measures were concerted amongst the four colonies it would clearly be impossible for them to protect themselves against these hordes of fierce and fearless savages, to whom homicide was the hall-mark of manhood. If they overran the Transvaal and the Orange Free State, would they not follow this up by destroying Natal, and then, with the augmented impetus of success, sweep right down into Cape Colony itself, destroying every vestige of the hated white man's occupation?

This was the situation when Disraeli became Prime Minister in 1874. He realised that the interests—nay, the very existence

—of the four South African colonies were inextricably intertwined. United they might stand: divided they would certainly fall. Lord Carnarvon, the Colonial Secretary, therefore revived the idea of federation, and sent out as High Commissioner Sir Bartle Frere, who had had successful experience as an administrator in India, with the explicit task of bringing this about if possible. Enquiries into the internal condition of the Transvaal showed that there was practically no organised central government there at all, that what government there was was bankrupt, that the Boers had provoked the Zulus by attacks in which they were both barbarously cruel and generally unsuccessful, and that the prospect of an attack by Cetewayo was dreaded by the burghers, of whom a certain number, at any rate, intimated that they would welcome the protection of Great Britain, even at the price of losing their independence. Acting on this information the British Government annexed the Transvaal in 1877, under a promise that it would be given complete colonial self-government under a scheme of South African Federation to be adopted in the immediate future. Thus the policy of non-intervention was abandoned once more.

In 1879 the expected Zulu war broke out. As usual, the British forces were quite inadequate for the task in hand, and hostilities began with a disaster at Isandlwana. Natal would have been at the mercy of the savages but for the defence of Rorke's Drift by a heroic handful of troops. The situation was saved by the victory of Ulundi, and Cetewayo was captured soon afterwards; but the prestige of the British Army had been impaired by the difficulty it had found in dealing with these primitive warriors. Moreover, as soon as the Zulu menace was removed and there was no longer any immediate need for British protection, the Boers began to chafe against the loss of their independence.

1879      § 194. The Midlothian Campaign.—Here was more fuel for the fires of Gladstone's wrath against "Beaconsfieldism." Wanton aggression in Afghanistan, support of the unspeakable Turk against our fellow-Christians, the forcible annexation of a free republic by the subjects of a free monarchy: these were topics eminently suited to his rhetorical powers, and even more so was the rapid rise in the national expenditure which all these adventures entailed, and the unjustifiable attempt to meet it by borrowing instead of by taxation. His retirement had very

soon become for him rather "a position of greater freedom and less responsibility" than the period of rest and contemplation which he had promised himself in 1874. Since Lords Hartington § 186 and Granville, to whom he had then surrendered the leadership of the Liberal Party, showed no signs of actively taking up the attack on these Beaconsfieldian iniquities, he determined to do so himself. To him these things were not mere matters of opinion about which men might differ—they were monstrous crimes against humanity, "the negation of God erected into a form of government." It was the highest, most urgent duty of a Christian man to fight and destroy the whole fabric of Tory policy.

In order to gain an excuse for conducting an active and vigorous onslaught upon the Government, he accepted the parliamentary candidature for Midlothian, which had always been a safe Tory seat since the first Reform Bill. Thither he went in the November of 1879, like a new St. George issuing forth to destroy the dragon. For a fortnight he addressed a series of great political meetings amidst an enthusiasm and a stirring of public opinion the like of which had never before been seen. This was a new phenomenon in our political life. In those days leading statesmen rarely made speeches outside Parliament, or perhaps their own constituencies. Disraeli himself had made set and isolated appearances at the Crystal Palace in 1872 and at Manchester in 1874, but nothing like this sustained campaign had ever before been attempted. "He bore his hearers through long chains of strenuous periods, calling up by the marvellous transformations of his mien a strange succession of images—as if he were now a keen hunter, now some eager bird of prey, now a charioteer of fiery steeds kept well in hand, and now and again we seemed to hear the pity or dark wrath of a prophet, with the mighty rushing wind and the fire running along the ground."<sup>1</sup>

This "drenching rhetoric," as Disraeli called it, had a decisive effect upon public opinion. The general election of 1880 resulted in the return to Parliament of 347 Liberals, 140 Conservatives, and 65 Irish Nationalists. This result was as surprising as it was painful to Disraeli and the Sovereign who adored him. To the Queen it seemed as if the country had gone mad: her only consolation was that since Gladstone was no longer the official

<sup>1</sup> Morley: *Life of Gladstone*.



leader of the Liberals, she need not have him as Prime Minister. But Lord Hartington, when she sent for him, pointed out that a Liberal Cabinet without Gladstone was as inconceivable as one in which he would play a subordinate part. He declined even to attempt such a task, and Victoria was compelled to send once more for the old statesman whom she could never bring herself either to like or to trust.

1880 § 195. *The Government and the Opposition.*—The position of the Liberals was nothing like so strong as it seemed, however. Firstly, the Cabinet was really a coalition of men with divergent aims and traditions, representing every shade of political opinion from the Marquis of Hartington, heir to the Dukedom of Devonshire, who was a patrician Whig of the old school, to Joseph Chamberlain of Birmingham, who stood for the most aggressive and up-to-date form of Radicalism, and was suspected of being a Republican. The very fact that the Ministry contained so many men of active and vigorous personality made it the less effective as a unit. Irresistible forces were continually coming up against immovable objects. They were a difficult team to drive, and their charioteer was too old for such a task. The mind of "The Grand Old Man," as he now began to be called, was getting ever less flexible; his attention was apt to be entirely absorbed by the one matter that had engaged it at the moment. His prestige, his long career, his almost terrible loftiness of character and demeanour, made his position remote from that of his colleagues. Indeed, "colleagues" is hardly the word to use for them. Whereas the members of the Beaconsfield Cabinet usually called their chief "Dizzy" (at any rate behind his back), Gladstone's subordinates never either spoke or thought of him as anything but "Mr. G." His position has been likened to that of a headmaster whose assistants are in such awe of him that they keep hidden from him many of their aims and actions.

While the Cabinet contained these elements of weakness, the Opposition contained equally unsuspected elements of strength. Besides the regular Conservatives under Sir Stafford Northcote there were the Irish Nationalists who had just perfected their machinery for holding up all parliamentary business until their own demands were conceded; and there was also a little group of Conservatives who came to be known as "The Fourth Party." The party leaders were too polite, too respectable, too observant of tradition for the taste of this little

group. They took to heart Disraeli's dictum that the function of an Opposition is to oppose. Irrespective of the organisation of Northcote they set themselves to hinder, thwart, and wreck the work of the Government in every possible way. They soon showed what could be accomplished by three or four bold and active men who possess that sort of courage which rushes in where angels fear to tread. The most conspicuous member of the group was Lord Randolph Churchill, younger brother of the Duke of Marlborough. He was a brilliant and popular platform orator, and he soon made himself a supreme master of the arts of debate. The public were immensely tickled at the sight of this jaunty David of debate slinging his sharp stones of sarcasm against the massive Gladstonian Goliath. That he achieved so much of his purpose was largely due to the unwariness of the old man himself, who was fatally ready to be drawn into wordy explanations and angry arguments which wasted precious hours of the House's time—which was exactly what the Fourth Party wanted. 1849-1895

§ 196. The Bradlaugh Episode.—Their first opportunity to harass the Government came with the very swearing-in of the new Parliament. Charles Bradlaugh, the Member for Northampton, requested to be allowed to make a solemn affirmation instead of taking the usual oath. His vocation was that of a lecturer and writer in support of atheism, and he explained that the words of the oath had no binding force upon him. A man of humble origin, he had made his way in the world, in the face of unpopular views both on politics and religion, by his own energy, courage, and force of character. His political views were those of an advanced Radical, but he was a vigorous opponent of Socialism, and a man of transparent honesty and sincerity. Many men in public life conformed outwardly to religious observances which were little more than empty forms to them, but Bradlaugh's simple honesty was too great to allow of his taking such a course. Moreover, he was determined to bring this question to an issue: Could affirmation be substituted for the oath in Parliament as it could in the Law Courts? The Speaker left the question to the House, which would probably have decided to let sleeping dogs lie but for the members of the Fourth Party. To them this opportunity of worrying the Government was far too good to be allowed to slip. Gladstone was in a most uncomfortable predicament. His religion was the chief thing in life to him; but he felt bound to support the Liberal principles of free speech and 1833-1891

toleration, which now laid him open to the charge of supporting atheism and blasphemy. Overlooking the irrelevancy of such arguments, the House decided that all members must take the oath. Having made his point, Bradlaugh professed himself ready to take this course; but the House declined by a majority of three to allow him to do so. He then demanded to be heard in support of his claim at the bar of the House. The Prime Minister reported to the Queen that "his address was that of a consummate speaker," but it could not influence the House, which was carried away by a tidal wave of intolerance. The most brutal and unfounded charges were made against Bradlaugh's private life. His seat was declared vacant, but he was re-elected by Northampton in decisive fashion. Then arose a new dispute which reminds us of the Wilkes struggle of a century before: Has the House of Commons the right to reject a member who has been duly elected?

Four times in the next four years the House refused to accept Bradlaugh as a member, and each time he was defiantly returned by his faithful constituents. However few of them shared his religious views, they felt that he represented that freedom of thought and speech which is one of the Englishman's most cherished birthrights. He repeatedly demanded to be allowed either to affirm or to swear, he was forcibly ejected from the House, he was imprisoned in the Clock Tower, he was prosecuted in the Law Courts: still he fought on with unquenchable ardour and combativeness. At last he was victorious, for when he came to take the oath at the opening of the next Parliament (in 1886) the Speaker admitted his right to do so without question. A Conservative Ministry was by this time in power, and Bradlaugh-baiting had lost half its charm now that it was no longer associated with Gladstone-baiting. He afterwards became a very useful and popular member of the House.

§ 197. The Fruits of "the Forward Policy."—In March 1881, Lord Beaconsfield died. At no period of his life had he enjoyed the exuberant vitality of his great rival, and he had for many years waged a long struggle with ill-health. Doubtless his last days were somewhat clouded by the untoward fate which overtook his policy in Afghanistan and South Africa.

Lord Lytton had resigned the Viceroyalty of India as soon as he heard of the result of the General Election of 1880. He well knew that it portended the reversal of his whole policy for the

protection of the North-Western frontier. As a matter of fact, it is difficult to see how Beaconsfield himself could have continued to support that policy. It was clear that nothing short of a large permanent garrison would induce the Afghans to submit to our claims, and it was equally clear that the British taxpayer would never consent to such an expensive undertaking. A punitive expedition under Sir Frederick Roberts restored the § 180 prestige of British arms. That done, there was a return to the former policy of making Afghanistan a strong and friendly buffer-state between British-India and Russian ambitions.

In South Africa the position was more complicated. The annexation of the Transvaal had been bitterly attacked by Gladstone in his Midlothian campaign, but on his accession to power he hesitated to undo what was now an accomplished fact, especially as he was misled by reports from military and civil experts on the spot (in whom the wish was doubtless father to the thought) that the Boers were becoming reconciled to the idea. How mistaken this estimate was soon became clear; for, disappointed that the change of government in England had brought about no immediate reversal of policy, they rose in rebellion, and overran the eastern part of Natal. The tiny force at the disposal of Sir George Colley, the Governor of that colony, was quite inadequate to deal with the situation. He agreed to an armistice, and transmitted to the Boer Government the offer of a full and fair discussion of their demands, requiring a reply within forty-eight hours. Without waiting to hear the result of this move, he resumed the offensive by taking possession of Majuba Hill, which commanded a Boer outpost at Laing's 1881 Nek. His forces were driven off the hill by the Boers, and he himself and ninety of his men were killed. Meanwhile a message was on its way to him from President Kruger (who knew nothing of the Majuba incident) expressing gratitude and a willingness to confer.

Here was a difficult situation; and there was a sharp division in the Cabinet as to how to deal with it. The Radical element, especially Bright and Chamberlain, were for continuing the policy of withdrawal; the extreme Whigs, on the other hand, were for maintaining the annexation at all costs; while an intermediate section were for the defeat of the Boers before their demands were granted. It is not easy to see how the annexation could be persisted in against the almost unanimous desire of the

inhabitants, especially as the Cape Dutch were showing dangerous signs of sympathy with the Boers, and the loss of all South Africa might have been the result. Nor did it seem worthy of the British Empire that it should feel the necessity of proving that it could defeat an enemy which consisted of 8,000 farmers. At any rate, Gladstone's ideals of Christian statecraft left him no option. A convention was held at Pretoria which granted the Boers complete autonomy, except that they could not maintain an independent foreign policy, and that they were compelled to admit all white settlers to equal civil rights. There the matter was left—for the time.

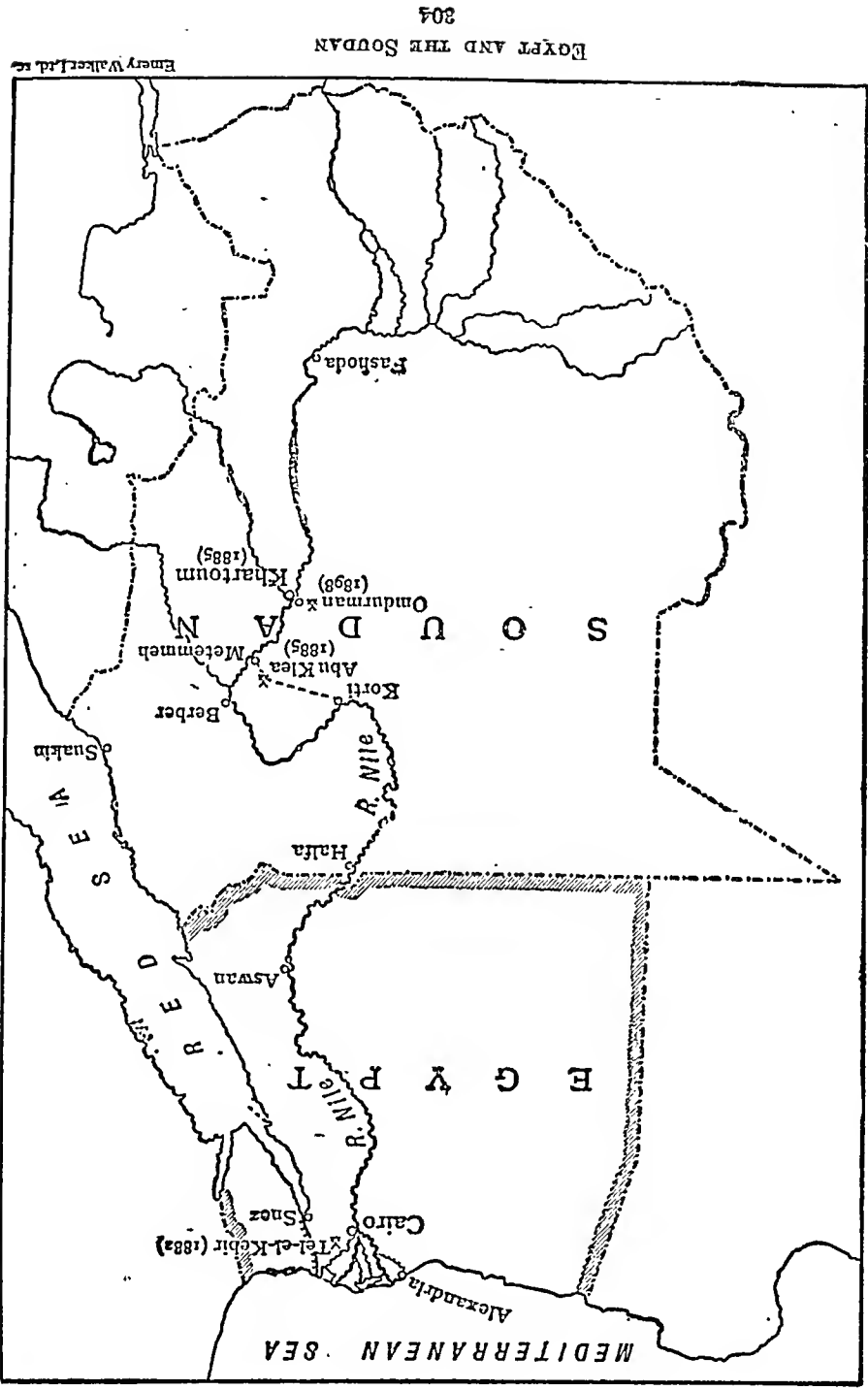
- 1884 § 197. The Enfranchisement of "Hodge."—The one wholly successful piece of work performed by the second Gladstone Ministry was the Parliamentary Reform Act of 1884. That this was merely a matter of simple justice was hardly disputed, even by the intransigent members of the Fourth Party. Roughly, it may be said to have enfranchised the agricultural labourer on the same terms as the town-dwelling artisan had enjoyed since
- § 151 1867. The Conservatives, whose chief strength lay in the counties, dared not oppose it openly or vigorously, and it passed the House of Commons by handsome majorities. The House of Lords, however, found an excuse to reject it in the fact that it was not accompanied by a re-arrangement of the constituencies to correspond to the new electorate. Gladstone had promised that a Redistribution Bill should follow as soon as it became law, but the Peers refused to buy a pig in a poke. The question of the franchise became merged in a struggle between the two Houses; and thus began the quarrel between the Liberal Party and the Peers which ended only in the Parliament Act of 1912. The proposal to mend the Commons developed into a proposal to end or mend the Lords. Gladstone pointed out that since the Great Reform Bill only two out of thirteen General Elections had been favourable to the Conservatives: how then could it be claimed that the permanent Conservative majority in the House of Lords represented the "real and solid convictions of the people"? But the essential conservatism of his own nature, intensified by his advancing years, made him unwilling to carry the struggle to a definite issue, and the efforts of the Queen to bring about a compromise were at last successful. Lord Salisbury and Sir Stafford Northcote called on the Prime Minister at Downing Street, took tea with him, and had a pregnant hour of

informal conversation. They were satisfied as to the plan of his Redistribution Bill, the opposition was withdrawn, and all ended happily.

Just at this very time, however, events were developing in Egypt the issue of which was in tragic contrast to this amusing storm in a teacup.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Differentiate between the three extensions of the franchise during the nineteenth century.
2. What exactly were the points of issue in the Bradlaugh controversy?
3. Trace the effects of "Beaconsfieldism": (a) in the Near East; (b) in Afghanistan; (c) in South Africa.
4. Was Gladstone's action over Majuba a craven betrayal of British interests, or an act of enlightened Christian statesmanship?



EGYPT AND THE SUDAN  
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## CHAPTER XXXIV

### Cairo and Khartoum

"Oh! whither hast thou led me, Egypt?"

SHAKESPEARE.

THE story of the establishment of British control in Egypt runs for the most part a familiar course. Impelled by commercial and financial motives the Government reluctantly intervened, only to find itself involved far deeper than it expected or desired in Egyptian politics. It struggled spasmodically to throw off the burden of administration which it had half-unwillingly undertaken, but all in vain; and before the end of this chapter we shall find Great Britain saddled with the chief responsibility for the government of a people who were far from grateful for the service rendered.

The creation of Modern Egypt was diversified, however, by one episode of extraordinary interest and dramatic "value." In the story of the fall of Khartoum there are present all the elements of high tragedy: noble characters lured to their doom by their own inherent weaknesses; the unforeseen results of the interplay of contrasting types of human nature; the mocking perversity of fate; and the clash of two masterful wills that led straight on to the tragic *dénouement*.

§ 199. The Dual Control.—Egypt was an outlying province of Turkey which had become practically independent of the Sultan under the famous Mehemet Ali. The population of the country had two distinct strata, the Turko-Arab conquering race and the Coptic peasantry. The main function of the former was to rule the country and to wring taxes out of the latter.

The turning-point in the history of the country in the nineteenth century was the reign of Ismail Pasha (1863-1879). He was fascinated by the developments of European civilisation.



and he promoted railways, telegraphs, harbours and irrigation schemes in reckless profusion; most important of all, the cutting of the Suez Canal was undertaken. But of all the resources of civilisation, that which delighted Ismail most was the credit-system. He had no idea of the value of money, and to have boundless wealth to spend on personal luxuries and public works, in return for mere paper promises to repay, seemed too good to be true. It was. There came a time when not even the severest sort of flogging could extort sufficient revenue from the humble tax-payer to satisfy the demands of the foreign creditors for their interest. The Khedive kept the wolf from the door for a year or two by selling his shares in the Suez Canal undertaking to the British Government, but the relief was only temporary. The English, French and Italian holders of the Egyptian Bonds—that is to say, the wealthy people who had lent Ismail money—began to get anxious lest he should go bankrupt and repudiate his debts. They put pressure on their respective Governments to intervene and save them from loss.

§ 190

There is a saying that “money talks,” and it certainly talks very loud in international politics. The Governments of the Powers set up a joint “*Caisse de la Dette*” and compelled the Khedive to pay into it the whole of the Egyptian revenue, so that the interest due to the European capitalists could be made a first charge on it. Furthermore he had to admit English and French administrators to his Council and agree to accept their “advice” on all financial matters. But Ismail soon became restive under these galling restrictions. He suddenly repudiated the arrangement, and dismissed the foreign counsellors. Thereupon the allied Powers induced his suzerain, the Sultan, to dethrone him in favour of his son Tewfik, and the Dual Control was once more established in Cairo.

1876

§ 200. The Rebellion of Arabi Pasha.—Within a few months, however, a new complication arose. Naturally, most of the officers of the Egyptian army were of the dominant race, and the minority, who were of *fellah* origin, found themselves at a grave disadvantage, both socially and professionally. This discontent was now focussed by one of their number named Arabi Pasha. He started a mutiny against the prevailing army organisation, but the movement quickly developed into an attack on the whole system of foreign domination, whether Turk, Arab, English, or French. The new Khedive was very frightened.

1881

He replaced his Ministry by one with Arabi himself at its head, but there was now no holding the rebellion, which began to take on yet another aspect, and to concentrate on the expulsion of the "infidel." The administration were powerless to protect the property and lives of foreigners. When fifty Europeans were massacred at Alexandria in a wild frenzy of religious passion, a combined French and British fleet was sent into Aboukir Bay 1882 to protect the survivors and to prevent the rebels from fortifying the city.

It was not without considerable qualms that the Gladstone Ministry had authorised this step; probably it would never have done so had it not been urged on by the fiery French Premier, Gambetta. When the rebels defied the Allies, however, and it became necessary to destroy the fortifications by a naval bombardment, the British fleet was left to take action alone. There had been a political change in France; Gambetta's successor reversed his policy, and withdrew the French ships, with assurances that, although France declined to take any further part in Egyptian affairs, she would make no objection to the British Government taking any steps it thought fit.

This was a situation which Gladstone had never bargained for; but it was impossible for Britain to withdraw at this stage, and leave Egypt under the heel of a military adventurer whose usurpation of power had already led to riot and massacre, and would inevitably lead to national bankruptcy in the near future. The fortifications of Alexandria were destroyed, and a few months later a small but highly efficient expeditionary force under Sir Garnet Wolseley stormed Arabi's camp at Tel-el-Kebir 1882 and utterly obliterated his army. The authority of the Khedive was thus restored, but it was evident that if he was left to his own devices he would speedily be overwhelmed in financial difficulties, and would again be at the mercy of the disaffected elements in his army. Having set our hands to the plough, we could not turn back; and it was decided to give him the support of a small British Army of Occupation and the assistance of some British administrators, until his authority should be firm enough, and his ministers efficient enough, to dispense with these aids. It was hoped that a very few years would suffice to bring about this desirable state of affairs.

§ 201. The Mahdi.—But meanwhile, far away to the south, there was brewing another semi-national, semi-religious revolt,

in which the British Government was destined to be even more gravely involved.

The Soudan is a great area consisting partly of tropical forest, partly of scrub and sandy desert, extending hundreds of miles westward from the Upper Nile. It had been conquered by Mehemet Ali, and now was garrisoned by Egyptian troops, often under the command of retired British officers in the pay of the Khedive. The latter's hold over it was chiefly manifested in spasmodic but violent attempts to collect taxes and to put down the slave-raiding of the Arab tribes who inhabited it. On an island in the upper waters of the Nile there lived during the 'seventies a sort of Mohammedan saint named Mohammed Ahmed. He began a religious revival, denouncing worldliness and corruption, and preaching a return to the primitive purity and simplicity of the days of the Founder of the Faith. He prophesied, he saw visions, he worked miracles, he attracted followers from all the country round. At last, about 1880, he announced that he was the Mahdi, the last of the twelve disciples of the Prophet himself, come to drive out the Egyptian oppressors and the white infidels who ground the faces of the faithful with taxes and corrupted their souls with the abominations of the West. Individuals, families, whole tribes were converted by his gospel. He began to organise a formidable military state. The perturbed Khedive got together a few thousand soldiers from the remnants of Arabi's recently-disbanded army, placed it under the command of an unemployed British colonel named Hicks, and sent it up the Nile to deal with the situation. Hicks Pasha and his force were led into an ambush and utterly destroyed by the Mahdists. This startling success confirmed the belief of the Soudanese tribes that their leader was in very truth the Mahdi promised by the Koran, and the ranks of the rebels swelled rapidly. The outposts held by Egyptian detachments were in grave danger of being cut off, and it was feared that even Khartoum, the capital of the Soudan, an important town with 50,000 inhabitants, might be captured by the Mahdi.

Here was another problem for the luckless Gladstone Ministry. The Arabi rebellion had drawn them into an unwelcome responsibility for the government of Egypt itself; were they now to pour out British lives and British taxes in order to re-conquer the Soudan for their clients? After considerable hesitation, the Cabinet decided that the best plan would be to induce the Khedive

to abandon all hope of recovering his outlying dominions for the time, and to send a British officer to extricate the Anglo-Egyptian soldiers and civilians from their dangerous situation. After that, the Soudan must be left to stew in its own juice until such time as the Khedive's government was strong enough to undertake the re-conquest independently of British aid.

The great difficulty was to find a man with the necessary qualifications to undertake the withdrawal. He must be a man of great courage and steady nerve; he must know the Soudan and its people; he must be able to command the confidence of the Egyptians; and he must possess great organising powers. After some months of vain search it seemed to the dominant section of the Cabinet that a kindly Providence had sent them the very man.

§ 202. "Gordon for the Soudan!"—Charles Gordon was a 1833-1885 retired officer of the Royal Engineers. He was a very capable soldier, and had found employment in many parts of the world—notably in the service of the Emperor of China, for whom he had put down a formidable rebellion, and more recently in that of the Khedive as Governor-General of the Soudan. He was sustained and guided throughout his life by a fervid evangelical Christianity. He had shown himself quixotically disinterested by refusing four-fifths of the salary offered him by the Khedive; he had proved his utter fearlessness by going through the Tai-ping rebellion unarmed, and by riding alone across a hundred miles of desert to deal with the revolt of an Arab tribe. Altogether he seemed to be the personification of the Christian warrior-hero, and as such he had caught the imagination of the British public. Just at this juncture he chanced to be at home on leave, but he was known to be about to accept a post recently offered him by the King of the Belgians, to go out to organise his newly acquired § 213 Congo provinces.

The Government had already considered the possibility of sending Gordon to superintend the Soudan evacuation, but the British Consul-General in Egypt, Sir Evelyn Baring, who had come into contact with him during his Governor-Generalship, strongly objected to the idea. He foresaw that Gordon's great interest in the Soudan and its inhabitants would make him very reluctant to abandon his old friends and subjects to the Mahdi, and that his self-willed temperament would make him a very unreliable agent to carry out a policy of which he did not approve.

1883 Then there appeared a new phenomenon in English political life. A Press campaign was started by W. T. Stead in the *Pall Mall Gazette* in favour of "Gordon for the Soudan." Doubtless Governments had often been influenced by newspapers before, but this was the first time that what is now called a "slogan" was hammered in day after day until public opinion was aroused and the Ministers gave way. Some of them, indeed, were known to be strongly in favour of the appointment. As to the "G.O.M.", his mind was entirely absorbed in Irish affairs and in his coming Franchise Bill. His only interest in Egypt was to minimise the dangers of the adventurous policy in which he had been involved by the iniquities of "Beaconsfieldism." If the public wanted Gordon to be sent, let them have their way, and leave him to attend to things that really mattered. This surrender to popular clamour and to the "imperialist" Whigs in the Cabinet, against the considered opinion of Baring, who knew both Gordon and the Soudan better than anyone in England, was perhaps a pardonable mistake, but it was to have fatal consequences.

1884 § 203. The Conflict.—Gordon's instructions were perfectly clear. He was to go to Khartoum, and report on the best means of withdrawing the Anglo-Egyptian garrisons and officials, as a preliminary to carrying the policy out. It is difficult to understand how the Ministry can have overlooked the fact that Gordon had already, in an interview published in the Press, expressed his view that the Mahdi ought to be "smashed" and the Soudan retained; but all Baring's forebodings were justified. The object of his mission seemed gradually to fade from Gordon's mind from the moment he sailed. By the time he had reached Khartoum and found himself once more in contact with his old friends whom he had educated and Christianised, the very idea had become repellant to his ardent and sanguine nature. These were his people; he was responsible for their welfare to God alone. It was unthinkable that his schools and his mission buildings should be abandoned to "a feeble lot of stinking dervishes." Instead of carrying out his instructions, he poured out hundreds of telegrams to his official chief at Cairo, expressing all his hopes and plans, and pointing out how easy and right and necessary they were. Baring frigidly adhered to his instructions. Gordon got more and more exasperated, more and more determined that he would not be the passive tool of a "dastardly" policy. If he

sat tight long enough, an expedition would have to be sent to relieve him. With a couple of thousand good troops there was nothing he could not achieve.

Possibly he was right, and there is no doubt that a section of the Cabinet sympathised with this change of policy. But they now came up against an unexpected obstacle—the old man whom they had engineered into sending Gordon out. Gladstone began to realise that an attempt was being made to force his hand—in fact Gordon admitted as much in one of his indiscreet communications to the Press. The idea of an aggressive war was of all things most abhorrent to Gladstone; he was determined not to be inveigled into wasting British life and money on such a cause. Possibly the Mahdi was a sort of dusky Garibaldi, and his followers a brave people rightly struggling to be free. At any rate, Gordon and his sympathisers in the Cabinet should learn that the old man was not so easily fooled.

All through the summer of 1884 the Mahdists were gradually hemming Gordon in. He could easily have escaped down the Nile in one of his little gunboats, but that would have been abandoning his Soudanese friends to the Mahdi—and it would also have been abandoning his struggle with Cairo and Downing Street. Probably the idea hardly occurred to that heroic but obstinate spirit.

At home in England the Prime Minister was equally determined not to give way to the pressure put upon him by the Queen and the newspapers to send out a relief force. Sometimes even his colleagues in the Cabinet ventured timid suggestions of the same sort, but such awe did he inspire in them that for weeks at a time they would leave their thoughts unexpressed. Then Hartington put his foot down. He felt peculiarly responsible for sending Gordon out, and his conscience had long been troubling him. At last, at the end of July, he told Gladstone that he could not remain in the Ministry any longer unless an expedition were sent to Khartoum. The Prime Minister knew that his resignation would break up the Cabinet, and he gave way.

§ 204. Too Late !—There would still have been ample time 1884 to relieve Gordon, but for the perverse series of misfortunes and miscalculations which supervened. The officer put in charge of the expedition was Lord Wolseley, who had a well-deserved reputation for efficient military organisation, and who knew the

country well. He determined to take no risks, but to make most complete and elaborate arrangements to proceed up the Nile. Unfortunately, by the time his boats were ready, the waters of the river had got so low that it would be impossible to surmount the cataracts. The risks of a dash across the desert from Korti to Metemmeh would have to be made by a flying advance guard. Moreover, this change in route involved the loss of precious weeks while large numbers of camels were got together, and then more weeks had to be spent in training the camels and adapting the transport arrangements to them. At last a start was made, but it was not until January 21st, 1885, that it reached Metemmeh, having fought a severe engagement at Abu Klea and lost its commander, Sir Herbert Stewart, on the way. By the time it reached Khartoum on the 30th, it was two days too late. The exceptional lack of water in the Nile which had prevented the use of river transport had also exposed a part of the defences of Khartoum. The Mahdi had succeeded in taking it by storm, and Gordon was killed.

When the news reached England the consternation, grief, and anger knew no bounds. The general feeling was that the Prime Minister was no better than a murderer, and the Queen stopped very little short of telling him so in her letters. Gladstone bowed before the storm. He might have defended himself by pointing out that Gordon was largely responsible for his own fate, since he had never been asked to stay at Khartoum for more than a few weeks; but no taunts or vituperations ever moved the old statesman to throw the blame on the man who had paid for his error with his life. On another point he was equally adamant: he was not going to be driven by demands for "Vengeance on the Mahdi" to undertake the reconquest of the Soudan for the Khedive. Not until after twelve years of reorganisation by Baring and Kitchener, was Egypt able to set about that task with the support of the British Government.

§ 235

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Attempt a fair distribution of the blame for the Gordon disaster.
2. John Bright resigned from the Cabinet over the Bombardment of Alexandria. Was he right?
3. Give some modern examples of "Press Campaigns."
4. What is the political moral to be drawn from this chapter?

## CHAPTER XXXV

### The Upas Tree Sprouts Again

"It is liberty alone which fits men for liberty."—GLADSTONE.

"My six years' experience of the Irish Party, of their language in the House of Commons, and of their deeds in Ireland, makes it impossible for me to consent to hand over to them the property and rights of four millions of the Queen's subjects, our fellow-countrymen in Ireland. . . . I will be no party to a measure that will thrust them from the generosity and justice of the united and Imperial Parliament."—JOHN BRIGHT.

IN an earlier chapter of this book we commented on the disastrous failure of English statesmen to govern Ireland, and we saw that the fundamental cause of the trouble was that both the ownership of the soil and the political power in that country § 161 were in the hands of an alien caste. The aboriginal Irishman's grievance was partly agrarian and partly nationalistic: he wanted to possess his own farm and to rule his own country. Of these impulses the first was immeasurably the more urgent, for economic conditions made the mere existence of his family and himself dependent on his being able to get the use of a piece of land to cultivate, and the English idea of "landlord-right" was incompatible with this necessity. The desire for self-government was just as deeply ingrained in Irishmen as in Englishmen, but it became a pressing issue chiefly because the leaders of the Irish nation felt that only an Irish Government could deal with Irish land problems, since politicians at Westminster could not get out of their heads the idea that an Irishman was merely an inferior sort of Englishman, and that what was good for the one must be good for the other.

Of all the English statesmen who grappled with these difficulties, none brought to the task loftier motives or greater energies or more transcendent abilities than Gladstone. He succeeded in removing several crying grievances of the Irish nation, but his



attempt to make a broad and definite settlement of the relationship between the two countries broke down completely, and involved the Liberal Party in a split which permanently altered its character and paralysed it for twenty years to come.

§ 205. *The Two Nations.*—When we use the expression “the Irish nation” we must always keep in mind the fact that that nation is composed of two well-defined strata: the original inhabitants, Celtic in blood and Catholic in religion, and the “Middle Nation” which was Anglo-Saxon and Protestant. Apart from this cleavage there was one corner of the island in which the lower stratum consists of people of Scottish descent who are fanatically Presbyterian. Although these sections of the community never fused—for there was little inter-marriage between them—they all felt themselves to be truly “Irish,” for in the eighteenth century they had a common grievance in the fact that the English Government treated the sister island like it treated all its other colonies—as a possession to be exploited. It is a striking fact that not only have nearly all the Irish soldiers and administrators (from the Wellesleys and the Lawrences down to Roberts and Kitchener), and nearly all the Irish literary men, from Swift and Goldsmith down to Messrs. Bernard Shaw and W. B. Yeats, belonged to this caste, but so also have nearly all the leaders of Irish revolt against English government—Flood, Grattan, Edward Fitzgerald, Wolfe Tone, Robert Emmett, John Mitchel, and Thomas Meagher.

§ 37 Nevertheless, it was a Catholic Celt who first focussed Irish discontent in the nineteenth century. Daniel O’Connell spent most of his public life in an attempt to “give the Union a chance”—to extort from the predominant partner such terms as would enable Irishmen to prosper and be happy under the rule of the Parliament at Westminster. It was only during his last few years that the bigoted opposition of most of the Whigs and all the Tories drove him to the conclusion that nothing but a separate legislature would give Ireland what she wanted. “Repeal” was § 104 superseded by the “Young Ireland” movement, which went a stage further and aimed at an independent republic. Meanwhile, the famine of 1845–47 had completely altered the position. The population of the country was diminished by a quarter in the course of a few years, and there were henceforth millions of Irishmen in the United States and the Colonies, all filled with a bitter

hatred, not only of English rule, but also of the conditions of land tenure which had driven them from their native land. The Fenians had a twofold creed—the abolition of English rule, § 158 and the abolition of “landlordism”: as Fintan Lalor said: “Our object is to repeal the Conquest.” This revolt extorted § 160 two remedial measures from the English Parliament—the Church § 162 Act of 1869 and the Land Act of 1870—but these were mere branches of a Upas tree whose roots were as vigorous as ever. Fenianism was scotched, but not killed.

Meanwhile, the men who represented Ireland at Westminster on the existing £10 franchise were, apart from a handful of Conservatives who sat for northern constituencies, for the most part highly respectable members of the “Middle Nation,” who occasionally put forward a good-humoured plea for some sort of Home Rule, but whom nobody took very seriously. What was really wanted, if English statesmen were to be induced to pay attention to Irish troubles, was a man who could weld together this constitutional party (which lacked driving-power) with the Fenian agitation (which lacked direction).

§ 206. Parnell’s “Obstruction” and Davitt’s “Land League.”—The man who was destined to do this was Charles Stuart Parnell. He had not a drop of Celtic blood in his veins—1846-1891 his father was of pure English descent, and his mother American. He went to English schools and to Cambridge University, was a good cricketer, and a typical Anglo-Irish landlord. But he was disgusted at the effects of English rule in Ireland, like so many of his class before and since. When he entered Parliament in 1876 he determined to compel that body to find a solution for Irish discontents. He was a constitutionalist: he had no belief in violent methods, and was quite satisfied that he could extort from Parliament such a measure of self-government as would enable Ireland to solve her own problems her own way. The method by which he proposed thus to coerce Parliament was simple, but exhausting: it was to hold up all its other business, by prolonging debates and proposing amendments and claiming divisions. He was no orator, and always disliked public speaking; he had no literary airs and graces—he knew little even of the history of Ireland. But he knew what he wanted, and he let nothing stand in the way of his icy determination to get it. He soon attracted attention, member after member of the Irish Party began to support his plan of obstruction, and in 1880 he

was elected its chairman. Before long he gained such an ascendancy over his followers as few parliamentary leaders have ever acquired. His frigid, haughtily aloof leadership welded them into a solid phalanx which obeyed his lightest word, and made up for its small numbers by its unanimity in action.

Meanwhile, another new force had come into being over in Ireland. Michael Davitt had been concerned in the Fenian conspiracy of 1866-67 and had been sentenced to fifteen years' penal servitude. He had as a lad worked in a Lancashire cotton mill (where he had lost an arm in the machinery), and had there become familiar with the organisation of trade unions. When he was released on ticket-of-leave he put into operation a plan which he had devised for undermining the power of the landlords in Ireland, by forming a sort of trade union among the peasants. In 1879 he founded the Land League. The members bound themselves not to outbid each other in making terms with landlords; anybody who did so was treated as a "blackleg" by his neighbours. If any landlord made himself obnoxious to his tenants, the latter were to "go on strike" by refusing to pay rent, and the League was to support them.

Parnell had little sympathy with the objects and methods of the Land League—was he not himself a landlord?—but he saw that his own parliamentary campaign would be immensely strengthened by having this agrarian agitation at its back, and in any case he could not suffer Irish nationalism to be divided in its energies. He therefore took up the League, and became its president. He went to America and induced the doubting Fenian societies there to give his policy a trial, and to support it financially to the tune of £30,000. It was he, also, who suggested to the League its most powerful weapon, the "boycott." This was really a substitute for the physical violence which he disliked so much. Any person who offended the League—whether a tenant who outbid his neighbours, or a landlord who evicted them—was to be "sent to Coventry." Nobody was to speak to him, or to have any dealings with him: he could not buy or sell goods or hire labourers.

1878-  
1881

§ 207. Eviction and Coercion.—The fact that Ireland was still so full of unrest indicates plainly enough that the Land Act of 1870 had by no means solved the difficulties about land tenure. Gladstone had never expected that it would. It was the best he could do in the existing state of opinion in Parliament

—especially in the House of Lords—but it was hedged in by many § 162 limitations, the compensation clauses were unfairly administered, and it did nothing to relieve the very common case of a tenant who could not pay his rent.

The situation was greatly aggravated by another terrible famine which laid the country waste in 1878–80. Failure of crops meant that the tenant could not pay his rent, and failure to pay rent meant eviction—that is to say, the turning out of the peasant with his wife and children to go to the workhouse or die of cold and hunger. The yearly average of such evictions up to 1878 was about 500, but the following year there were over a thousand, and in 1880 nearly two thousand. As a matter of fact it paid the landlords to pull down the hovels in which these people lived and turn estates into pasture, for dairy farming and stock-raising were much more profitable to them than potato-growing by tenants who could not pay their rent. When General Gordon visited Ireland in 1880 he described the condition of the peasantry as “worse than that of any other people in the world, let alone Europe. They were patient beyond belief, but broken-spirited and desperate.” This desperation found expression in murder and violence, and there was a soldier or a policeman for every thirty inhabitants, vainly trying to keep order.

This was the situation when Gladstone assumed office in 1880. He appointed as Chief Secretary for Ireland W. E. Forster, the hero of the Education Act of 1870. Forster was an advanced democrat, but he was a rigid believer in law and order, and in his view the people of Ireland were unworthy of consideration so long as they indulged in law-breaking violence. As for the Land League, it was intolerable that an organisation of this sort should attempt to override the law of the land. Gladstone demurred to this point of view, and felt that some bold attempt to deal with the question of land tenure would have to be made in the near future. In the early days of the Ministry, however, he was so entirely absorbed in reversing “Beaconsfieldism” in foreign policy that he let Forster have his way.

The Chief Secretary had been convinced by experts on the spot that Irish disturbances were all caused by “village ruffians” who stirred up trouble which they were cunning enough to keep out of themselves. If they could be locked up the country would soon become peaceful. With this object he brought in a special Coercion Act to enable magistrates to imprison anybody they 1880

liked without trial. Not unnaturally, the Irish members opposed the Bill tooth and nail. They carried obstruction to such lengths that a twenty-two hour sitting was required for the Second Reading, and they capped this achievement by prolonging the debate on the Third Reading from four o'clock on Monday afternoon till nine o'clock on Wednesday morning. Special rules had to be devised to prevent this sort of thing for the future, and this handful of "Parnellites" had thus succeeded in destroying for ever that freedom of debate on which the House had prided itself for centuries. Meanwhile, to soften the harshness of the "Protection of Person and Property Act," a "Compensation for Disturbance Bill" was brought in to relieve the worst cases of hardship until such time as the new Land Bill could be got ready. This was thrown out by the House of Lords (who of course had passed the Coercion Bill readily enough); and thus Irishmen were given one more excuse for regarding murder and outrage as the only form of redress within their reach.

1882 § 208. Another Slip 'twixt Cup and Lip.—The Land Bill of 1881 was the longest and most complicated measure ever brought before Parliament. The principles it embodied were sometimes called "The Three F's": Fair Rents, to be fixed by an independent tribunal; Fixity of Tenure, so that the tenant could not be turned out so long as he paid his rent; and Free Sale, by which he could part with his interest in it when and to whom he chose. Broadly speaking, we may say that it divided the rights of ownership in land between the landlord and the tenant. The Conservatives were very hostile to the Bill, and the Irish members very critical, while amongst the Liberals nobody really understood or cared about it except the Prime Minister. Gladstone therefore had to bear almost alone the burden of explaining it clause by clause and of dealing with proposed amendments for the whole of the three months that it was before the House. It has been said that the Session of 1881 was the carrying of one measure by one man.

On the whole it was the most successful attempt of the British legislature to deal with Irish problems; but it was only in later years that the Irish themselves realised how important a landmark it was. As soon as it was passed Parnell brought some test cases before the Land Courts, and when the result was unsatisfactory, he ordered them to be practically boycotted by his followers. This was too much for the patience of the Government,

and in October, 1881, it decided to arrest him under the Coercion Act of the previous year. This action was immensely popular in England, but its result was far from satisfactory. Much of Parnell's hostile talk was due to his desire to gain the support of the Fenian movement, so as to be able to control it and prevent it from breaking out into open revolt. Certainly, the disturbances were much worse after his imprisonment than before, and Gladstone began to feel that Forster's policy of repression had failed. In this he had the active support of Chamberlain, who succeeded in carrying through a sort of unofficial bargain between the Government and Parnell (known as the "Kilmainham Treaty," from the name of the Dublin prison in which Parnell was lodged), by which Parnell was to be released at once, and in return was to use his best endeavours to keep the activities of the Land League within bounds. Forster resigned in anger at this reversal of his policy, and the opportunity was taken for a reshuffle of the Cabinet and an attempt to break down the wall of distrust and hostility between the Irish nation and the English Government. One of the ablest and best men in the Liberal Party, Lord Spencer, became Lord Lieutenant, and his Chief Secretary was to be Lord Frederick Cavendish, a man of the highest character and of great personal popularity with all classes. This policy of goodwill was called "The New Departure," and it seemed as if a turning had come in the long lane at last. But it was not to be. Within a few days of the new appointments Lord Frederick Cavendish was brutally murdered, along with Edward Burke, the Permanent Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant, in Phoenix Park, Dublin, in broad daylight and within sight of the Viceregal Lodge. This deed, which in its consequences was one of the most disastrous events in the disastrous history of Ireland, was the work of a murder society calling itself "The Invincibles." Their continued activities show how mistaken Forster was in supposing that he had got the disturbers of the peace under lock and key—as a matter of fact they had made a score of vain attempts to "get" the Chief Secretary himself.

The "New Departure" was too recent to be able to survive this shock. Another Coercion Bill, which the Irish Party (who were as shocked as everybody else at the murders) had not the courage to oppose, was rushed through Parliament, and the old story of suspicion, repression and violence began again.

§ 209. Parnell holds the Balance.—The Second Gladstone 1885

Ministry had begun as a coalition, and the longer it continued in office the more acute became the dissensions between its members. The Whiggish "Right Wing" got more and more restless at the activities of Chamberlain, who went about the country preaching what they called "rank socialism," such as payment of members and manhood suffrage. In 1885 he went so far as to suggest in the Cabinet a scheme of Home Rule for Ireland. There were to be County Councils which were to have complete control over local government, and were to elect a Central Board which was to exercise great powers over the internal affairs of the whole country. The Prime Minister supported the plan (although he never altogether trusted Chamberlain), but it was rejected by most of the Ministers as too revolutionary—a more momentous decision for all of them than they probably realised at the time.

1885 Signs soon began to appear that the Irish Party, having got at loggerheads with the Liberals, would see what was to be got out of their opponents. The Fourth Party had always attacked the Government's coercion policy; and Lord Randolph Churchill now gave Parnell an undertaking, with the sanction of Lord Salisbury, that the Conservatives would drop such methods if and when they were returned to power. Thereupon the Irish members joined forces with the regular opposition and the group of dissentient Liberals, and the Government was defeated on its Budget. Parliament could not be dissolved until the Voters' Register was brought up to date after the recent Reform Act, so Gladstone resigned, and Salisbury formed what was nicknamed "The Government of Caretakers" to wind up the session and dissolve in the autumn.

The tentative alliance between the Conservatives and the Parnellites seemed likely to bear fruit, for Salisbury appointed Lord Carnarvon to be Lord Lieutenant—a man who was well known to sympathise with the idea of Home Rule. With the Prime Minister's sanction, Carnarvon had a secret interview with Parnell in an empty house in London. Exactly what passed was never made known, but Parnell was so completely satisfied with the assurances he received that he instructed all the Irish voters in English constituencies to vote for the Conservative candidates. In the General Election the Liberals gained a majority of 85 over the Conservatives, and it was estimated that some twenty or thirty seats were lost to them by this adverse Irish vote. It was an ominous coincidence that the number

of Irish Nationalists returned was also exactly 85. The recent Reform Act had enfranchised the Irish peasants, who had voted § 197 solidly for Home Rule. Thus neither party could maintain itself in office without the support of Parnell and his phalanx.

§ 210. The Great Schism.—Gladstone realised the embarrass- 1886  
ment of the situation. Before the new Parliament met he approached Salisbury with an offer to support the Conservatives in office if they would undertake some settlement of the Irish question which would thus be the result of an agreement between the two great parties independent of the Irish members. But Salisbury not unnaturally refused to undertake such a critical piece of legislation under the control of an opposition majority. Like John Russell in 1845, he “handed the poisoned chalice back” § 78 to his opponent—who quaffed it to the dregs. For Gladstone determined to face the issue alone. During the past few years the idea had gradually taken possession of him that the only permanent cure for Irish troubles was to give that distressful island complete control over its own affairs. He had always been an ardent supporter of the principle of nationality, and he hated the thought that England should rule by force, like Turkey in the Balkans. This policy was opposed, however, to the spirit which was developing very fast during the 'eighties—§ 214 the spirit of pride in the Empire and of jealousy for its unity. Moreover, the Irish people had aroused grave mistrust by their recent course of violence and lawlessness; their representatives were hated for their “obstruction” in Parliament, and many Liberals were still sore from conflicts with the Irish element in English constituencies.

As soon as Gladstone had turned the Conservatives out, and 1886  
set about the formation of his third Cabinet, he began to find how strong was the opposition he would have to face. Hartington and most of the old Whigs refused to join him, and with this secession the aristocratic element disappeared for ever from the ranks of the Liberal Party: never afterwards was it “fashionable” to be a Liberal. Even more disconcerting was the attitude of Chamberlain and his Radical following. He was entirely in favour of autonomy for Ireland, but he preferred a federal form of government to the colonial type which Gladstone proposed to set up, and he retired from the Cabinet after a few weeks. An even more shattering blow was the opposition of John Bright, a lifelong friend and supporter of the Prime Minister. Bright



carried great weight amongst the Nonconformists—usually a solid tower of strength to the Liberals; he had always supported the policy of concession as opposed to coercion for Ireland, but he did not believe that the Irish could safely be trusted with political power, and he felt very strongly that the Presbyterians of Ulster ought not to be placed under the absolute domination of the Catholic majority of the rest of Ireland.

Still the old Premier pursued his way undaunted. Having made up his mind what was the right course, he would not take his hand from the plough. In May he introduced his Bill in the most crowded and expectant House that had ever assembled at Westminster. Apart from the broad issue as to whether it was wise to set up a second legislature and executive in the United Kingdom, and whether the Irish nation was fit for autonomy, the most crucial point was whether the Irish members were to continue to sit at Westminster. Gladstone's Bill adopted the latter alternative. The Imperial Parliament was to have complete control over the Army and Navy, Foreign Affairs and Customs, and Ireland was to contribute one-sixteenth of the Imperial revenue raised by direct taxation. A long and spirited debate took place. When the decisive moment came it was the influence of Bright that decided the dissentient Liberals not merely to abstain from the division, but to vote against the measure. From that moment there was no hope for it, and it was rejected by a majority of 48. Gladstone dissolved the Parliament, and the General Election returned 315 Conservatives to 196 Liberals, while Parnell's following remained 85. The Liberal Party was driven forth into the wilderness, where it wandered, except for one short and troubled interval, for the next twenty years.

1886

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Was Parnell successful in using the Irish Party as a "makeweight" ?
2. Discuss the truth and justice of the contradictory quotations at the head of this chapter.
3. Was "Home Rule" really incompatible with "Imperialism" ?
4. Are the methods of the Land League and of the Boycott justifiable ?

## CHAPTER XXXVI

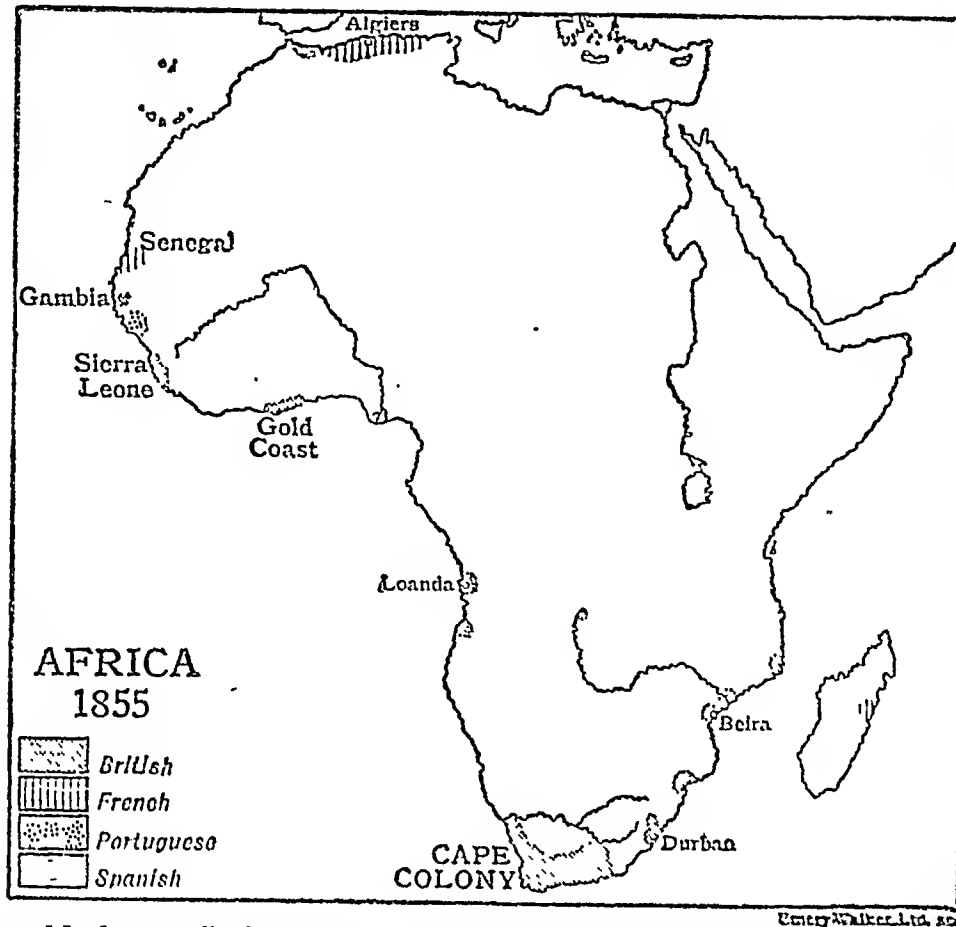
### 'The Opening-up of Africa

"Take up the White Man's burden—  
Send forth the best ye breed—  
Go bind your sons to exile  
To serve your captives' need ;  
To wait in heavy harness  
On fluttered folk and wild—  
Your new-caught, sullen peoples,  
Half-devil and half-child."

RUDYARD KIPLING.

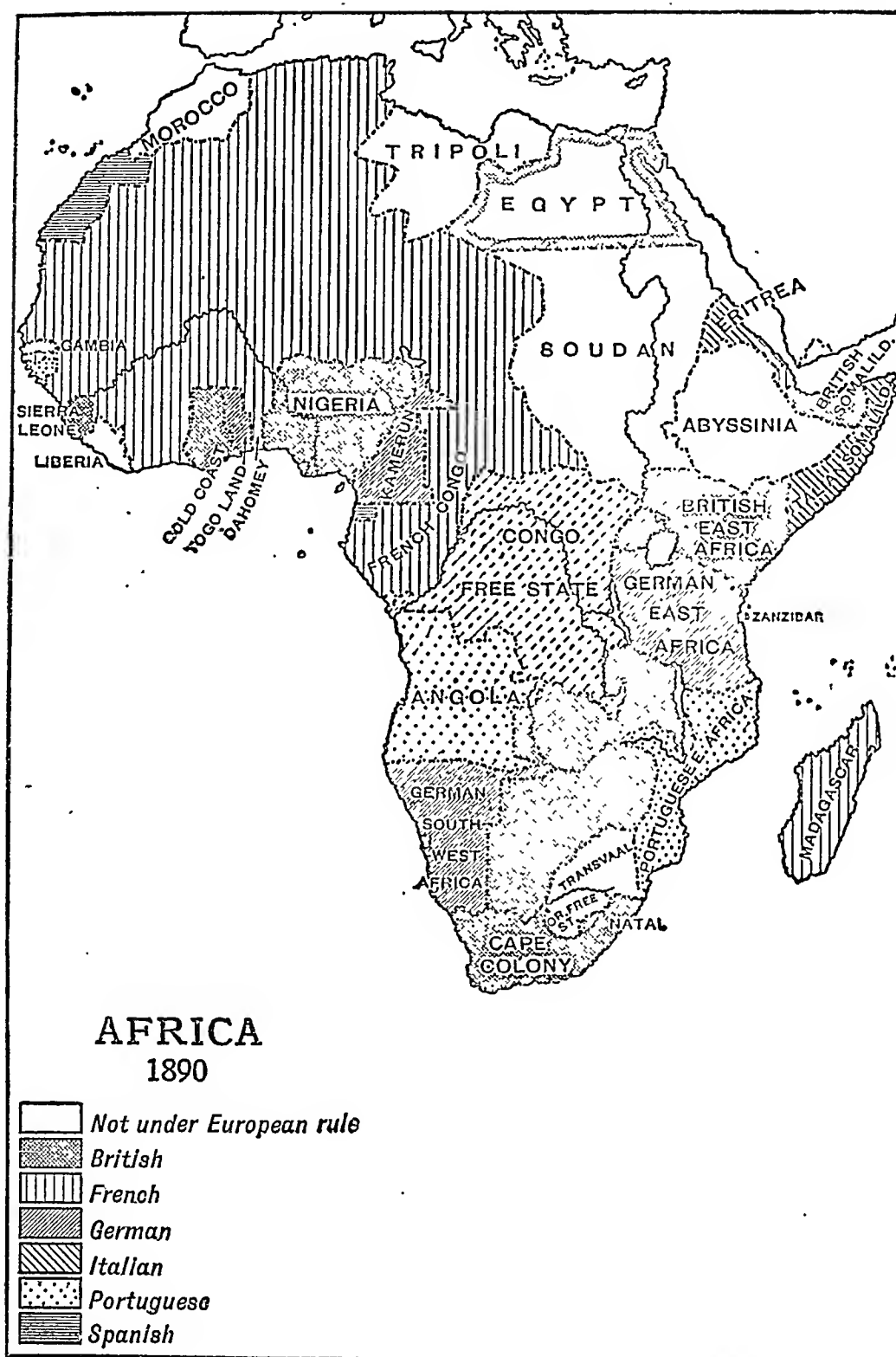
THE two maps on pages 324 and 325 tell their own story, and a very remarkable story it is. Within the space of thirty-five years a whole continent was explored, mapped, and appropriated by the Powers, great and small, of Europe. Britain's share constituted the greater part of a Third Empire, for its nature and the manner of its acquisition made it quite distinct from her Second, the great self-governing Dominions. Only a small proportion of the new possessions were "White Man's Country" where Europeans could settle down and make new homes with no thought of returning; they were acquired mainly with a view to being exploited commercially. Moreover, unlike the Dominions, they were acquired by a deliberate policy, as a result of the "imperialistic" tendency which took possession of a large and influential section of the community during the 'eighties and 'nineties. Another point of contrast between the new expansion and the old was that we were now impelled to take action by the example and competition of other nations who had suddenly awakened to the importance of colonial possessions, and were making haste to stake out claims in the only field of expansion we had left open to them.

§ 211. "All Further Extension would be Inexpedient."—For more than a hundred years after the close of the American War of Independence the British Government showed a marked lack of enthusiasm for colonial enterprises. Colonies were thought to be, in Turgot's phrase, like pears: when they were ripe, they



would drop off the tree. And meanwhile, the less government the better. The only conscious agency at work in the settlement of Australasia was a private colonisation society, formed by a few enthusiasts. No official notice was taken of Canada except to set it free to work out its own salvation; in South Africa, Ministers were sometimes driven by difficulties with the natives and with the Dutch to sanction a policy of annexation, but such moves were only made fitfully; and early in the 'fifties what seemed like a definite end of the "forward" policy was made by the Conventions of Bloemfontein and Sand River. Certainly, the British dominion in India was extended, but here we had already undertaken responsibilities which it would have been impossible for us suddenly to repudiate, and the expansion was necessitated in the interests of defence and of the good government which we felt it was an obligation on us to provide.

There were several aspects of the national spirit which were at war with this quiescent attitude of Government, however. Firstly, the humanitarian spirit of the age manifested itself in an



§ 82 attempt to fulfil our duties to the backward races of the world by converting them to Christianity, and by stopping the slave trade which was still carried on by less enlightened peoples. Missionaries were continually clamouring for annexation as the only method by which the African races could be controlled for their own good, and the Navy found that ports of call on the African coast were urgently required in those efforts to stop the trade which formed one of its chief occupations for half a century. Secondly, there was the commercial instinct which was always seeking untapped sources of wealth in far countries. The history of the East India Company shows how this sort of enterprise leads by almost unconscious steps into governmental responsibilities. The Gold Coast Trading Company, founded in 1827, provided another example of this process. Its particular interest was in developing the palm-oil trade. For some time it had rivals in Dutch and Danish companies formed with the same object, but these were never able to pay their way, and were later on bought out by the British. The servants of the company got into conflict with the natives; the Government could not allow British subjects to ill-treat these natives, nor to be ill-treated by them: hence a formal protectorate over the coast was declared in 1843.

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Thus there were abundant signs that Britain was drifting into more acquisitions of territory on the west coast of Africa; and in 1865 a Commission was appointed to advise the Government upon the best policy to pursue there. It passed a unanimous resolution that "all further extension of territory or assumption of government, or any new treaty offering protection to native tribes would be inexpedient." It was easier to lay this policy down than to carry it strictly out, however, and within a few years we were led into the Ashanti War by the activities of traders on the Lower Niger.

1855-1885 § 212. The Great Age of African Exploration.—At that date very little was known about the interior of Africa. Until halfway through the century the source of the Nile was the subject of speculation, nothing was known of the Great Lakes, and it had only recently been discovered that the Niger was not, as had been supposed, a confluent of the Congo. In 1858 Speke and Baker travelled through Somaliland and discovered Tanganyika and Victoria Nyanza, and Speke shortly afterwards solved the riddle of the Nile by following it down from its source.

A little later the north-eastern quarter of the continent was further explored by two Germans: Nachtigall, who travelled through the Libyan desert and the Sahara as far as Lake Chad, bringing back masses of valuable information; and Schweinfurth, who, primarily in the interests of botanical research, explored the Upper Nile valley and Abyssinia.

Even more significant were the travels of David Livingstone, 1813-1873 in whom the missionary spirit reached its culmination. He was sent out by the London Missionary Society in 1840 to Bechuanaland, whence he travelled farther and farther northwards establishing mission stations, until he reached the Zambesi. Between 1852 and 1856 he made a great journey past the Victoria Falls up the river, and eventually reached the west coast. Thence he turned back, and followed the Zambesi right down to the sea. He returned home with an enormous amount of information as to the topography and natural history of Central Africa. He severed his connection with the L.M.S., but he always felt that the ultimate object of his travels was "to bring justice and peace into the darkness of Africa," and particularly to seek out and destroy the roots of the slave trade pursued by the Arabs. In 1858 he went out again as head of an expedition authorised by the British Government, when he thoroughly explored the Zambesi valley and discovered Lake Nyassa. On his third journey (1864-72) he mapped out East Central Africa and the upper waters of the Congo. He was by this time a public character, and when he disappeared from all knowledge the general anxiety resulted in an American newspaper sending an expedition to discover his whereabouts, and to rescue him. The leader of this expedition was Henry M. Stanley, an adventurous journalist 1841-1904 of Welsh birth who had emigrated as a boy to America, had served in the Confederate Army, and had recently acted as War Correspondent for the *New York Herald* in Abyssinia. He found Livingstone in 1871 near Lake Tanganyika, but the veteran's heart was in his work, and he declined to be "rescued," so Stanley returned without him. Livingstone's health gradually broke down, and two years later he was discovered by his faithful blacks on his knees beside his camp bed with his Bible in his hands, dead. His picturesque and pathetic end, a thousand miles from a white man, in the heart of his beloved Africa, did almost as much to focus public interest in the continent as the discoveries he had made in his lifetime.

That interest was personified by Stanley. He had gone out on a mere newspaper "stunt," but he came back a devotee of African exploration. The *New York Herald* and the *Daily Telegraph* now jointly financed an expedition under Stanley's leadership to solve some of the problems of Central African geography. From Zanzibar he marched westwards to Tanganyika, which he thoroughly explored; thence he proceeded to the Upper Congo, which there flowed northwards and had been supposed by Livingstone to be a tributary of the Nile. Stanley effectively disposed of this idea by following it right down to its mouth, and proving it to be the second largest river in the world. This journey was performed in the face of incredible dangers and difficulties, all overcome by the leader's indomitable determination, which spared neither himself nor his subordinates. By the time he reached the Atlantic coast all his European companions and two-thirds of his natives had fallen by the way, and his own hair had turned white. He subsequently made several other journeys, but this was by far the most important, for it disclosed to the world an almost unlimited field for commercial expansion.

§ 213. The Scramble for Africa begins.—When Stanley returned he wrote an account of his journey called *Through Darkest Africa*, but he found the British merchants very sceptical and the British Government very lethargic. The man who first realised the real significance of the discoveries was Leopold II, King of the Belgians, who put forward a scheme for developing them with the aid of the natives. He founded an International Association of the Congo, but this soon became exclusively Belgian, and indeed was mainly supported out of the King's private purse. He sent Stanley out in 1879 to set up trading stations. The rubber, timber, palm-oil, and ivory, which were forthcoming opened the eyes of the rest of Europe. Portugal advanced claims based on the discovery of the mouth of the river nearly four centuries before; a French exploring party under de Brazza was sent to the northern bank of the river, where it came into sharp conflict with the Belgian activities under Stanley; most important of all, the attention of the Germans was aroused. For some years Bismarck had discouraged the rising interest in colonial expansion. The end and aim of his policy was the hegemony of Prussia in Europe; that once attained he was unwilling to jeopardise it by doubtful enterprises which must

bring him into conflict with other Powers. But in 1882 the German Colonial Society was founded, after a visit of Stanley to the country, and in 1883 a commercial pioneer named Luderitz established a station between the Orange River and Walfish Bay, after the British Government had repudiated any claims to that part of the continent. Then in 1884 Dr. Nachtigall made agreements with native chieftains by which Germany took possession of Togoland and of the Cameroons; and Dr. Carl Peters, President of the Colonial Society, landed near Zanzibar with a supply of blank treaty forms and German flags, and had got possession of a considerable tract of country in the neighbourhood. The British Government declined the urgent request of the Sultan of Zanzibar to be taken under protection, and Lord Granville, the Foreign Secretary, said that "Her Majesty's Government viewed with favour these schemes, the realisation of which will entail the civilisation of large tracts over which hitherto no European influence has been exercised." Nevertheless, a group of British merchants, alarmed at the German developments, organised a British East Africa Company, which set to work to make agreements with native chieftains in what is now Kenya.

Thus Bismarck's hand was forced. If he held aloof any longer Germany would be getting entangled in disputes, just as he had feared. He therefore invited the Powers to join in a Conference at Berlin, in 1884. The danger of friction was averted by laying down the rules of the game of land-grabbing. Each Power was allotted certain "spheres of influence" within which it was to have prior claim, each was to notify the others when it assumed a "protectorate," and no occupation was to be valid unless it was made "effective"—this last point being to prevent such claims as that made by Portugal, to a vast territory stretching from ocean to ocean, based on moribund settlements at the mouths of the Congo and the Zambesi.

§ 214. "Imperialism" in Britain.—It was at about this 1883-1888 time that the idea of "imperialism" began to take possession of the people of this country. Hitherto it had been confined to Radical "cranks," like Buller and Wakefield, Sir Charles Dilke and W. E. Forster. Beaconsfield had, during the last ten years of his life, uttered vague words about "imperial consolidation," but his real interest was limited to making India safe from Russian aggression; he did little for overseas Britain except to sanction Carnarvon's ill-fated attempt to form a federal union § 193



in South Africa. As to Gladstone, he was entirely absorbed in domestic reforms, and was wedded to the mid-Victorian ideal of "letting well alone" in the colonies. The great dominions had grown up, partly through the activity of "idealoguees" like Wakefield, partly through the devoted labours of able administrators such as Sir George Grey, but mainly through the blind pressure of economic conditions in Britain. The words that Carlyle used of the First Empire might well be applied to the Second: it had been acquired "in a fit of absence of mind," so far as the nation as a whole was concerned. But the conditions from which this Third Empire sprang were altogether different. Industrialism was by this time taking root in all the countries of Western Europe, and impelling them to seek new sources for raw materials and markets for manufactures. Truly, they were too late to share in the other great boon which the growth of the dominions had gained for Britain—an outlet for surplus population; for nearly all the lands in which white men could make permanent homes were already under the Union Jack. But half a loaf is better than no bread at all, and they now hastened to appropriate eligible sites for colonies in tropical or sub-tropical Africa. Thus, Britain was roused from her "absent-mindedness" by seeing her neighbours busily pegging out claims to vast tracts of country that offered a virgin field for economic exploitation.

1865 In 1884 an Imperial Federation League was formed, with W. E. Forster as President. Among its first members were two statesmen whose future careers were destined to be profoundly affected by its ideals—Joseph Chamberlain, the Radical *enfant terrible* of Gladstone's Second Ministry, and Lord Rosebery, a brilliant young aristocrat who seemed to be destined some day to lead the Liberal Party into new paths. The leaders of industry and commerce woke up to the idea that "Trade follows the Flag," and the general public began to take a pride in "The Empire on which the sun never sets," and in world maps with British possessions coloured red. The movement had its literary side too. Perhaps its genesis was Dilke's *Greater Britain: a Record of Travel in English-speaking Countries*. Ruskin's Oxford Lectures had a very Imperialistic tone, and they had a profound effect on a generation of undergraduates which included Cecil Rhodes and Alfred Milner. At the sister University, Seeley's lectures on *The Expansion of England*,

which were afterwards published and widely read, did much to arouse interest in the history and significance of imperial development. Somewhat later began to appear the stories and poems of Rudyard Kipling, which had for their *mise-en-scène* the outposts of Empire, and for their *personnel* the soldiers and pioneers who upheld the flag in those regions.

§ 215. "The Lion's Share."—The growth of the Dominions had owed much to circumstances which gave Britain great advantages over other countries: priority in industrial development, and freedom from the internal struggles for nationality and liberty which handicapped her competitors; but in the building up of the Third Empire she had no such advantages. She came comparatively late into the field, and her rulers, with recent experiences in Egypt fresh in their minds and with the problems of Irish discontent pressing for solution, had let many favourable opportunities for expansion go by. Rival Powers had firmly established themselves in Africa before she bestirred herself to play an active part in the partition of that continent. Yet, when once she did so, her acquisitions proved far more valuable than those of any of the Powers which had taken the initiative. The most important of all was the bringing of the great stretch of country between Cape Colony and Lake Tanganyika under her control. This was such a great adventure that the story of it must be reserved for another chapter of this book; and so must an account of the circumstances which led to the conquest of the Soudan. But, apart from these, the new British dependencies in tropical Africa itself were second only to those of France in area, and were very much more important even than those of France in variety, in population, and in potential wealth. They included the whole of the Lower Niger Valley (which was the sphere allotted to us at the Berlin Conference in return for a surrender of claims on the Congo country), the extension of the old stations at Sierra Leone and on the Gold Coast into large and important dependencies, and in East Africa the valuable Protectorates of Kenya and Uganda.

All these territories have had an uneventful history of steady development and increasing prosperity; but those which came under the rule of foreign Powers have been less fortunate. The leaven of philanthropy with which the King of the Belgians began his rule of his Congo territory soon evaporated in the desire to get rich quick. Horrible tales were brought home by British,

German, and Swedish missionaries of atrocities inflicted on the natives to extort labour and taxes from them. An inquiry was held, and some improvement followed, but the prosperity of the Free State has been much hampered by mismanagement and by disaffection among the natives. The Germans, again, with their rigid barrack-square type of officialdom puzzled and frightened the primitive folk with whom they came into contact. The repeated risings against their rule were crushed with severity, but from an economic point of view the colonies were a failure—none of them even paid its way except Togoland, which was the smallest. The French have been more successful in gaining the confidence of their new subjects, but although the vast extent of their African territories has the advantage of being in a solid block, it includes a great deal of Sahara desert which is economically valueless. As a whole it has been a source of loss rather than of gain, except that it has added to the man-power of the army, which now includes a number of semi-savage regiments.

To what causes can we assign the superior happiness and prosperity of British Tropical Africa? Partly to the fact that the idea of material gain has always been tempered by the tradition that still lingers in Whitehall, that the Government is a sort of trustee for the backward races of mankind, and will not allow them to be exploited for the benefit of profit-seekers; partly to the fact that in all our possessions we keep an "open door"—that is to say, people of all nationalities can come and go and buy and sell unhampered by any preferential treatment for our own people; partly to the social conditions in Britain, which encourage the younger sons of our old ruling caste to seek careers overseas; partly to the freedom and breadth of view engendered in the Briton by his lack of the military training which is universal amongst foreign nations; and partly to the energy and self-reliance bred in him by the old-established principle that he must look after himself, and not expect guidance and support from the Government.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Differentiate between the three British Empires.
2. To what extent did the Imperial Federation League achieve its objects?
3. What were the chief factors in the opening up of Africa.
4. Explain and comment on the quotation at the head of this chapter.

## CHAPTER XXXVII

### The Upas Tree Foils the Old Woodman

"What Ireland wants is twenty years of resolute government—a government that does not flinch, that does not vary, a government that they cannot hope to beat down by agitation."—SALISBURY.

"The only alternative which Parliament has been able to devise to Home Rule is the permanent establishment of an odious inequality between the people of Ireland and the people of Great Britain, in spite of the most solemn pledges of equality at the Treaty of Union and on many occasions since."—MORLEY.

THE rejection of the Home Rule Bill of 1886 had marked the culmination of the first phase of the Irish Revolution. It had lasted about seven years, and had been remarkable for the obstructive tactics of Parnell and his followers in Parliament, for the activities of the Land League, for the Phoenix Park murders, and for the schism in the Liberal Party over the adoption of Home Rule by Gladstone. The second phase, which was also some seven years in length, is the main subject of this chapter. We shall see how the Conservatives ruled Ireland by means of a drastic Coercion Bill, which led to a general reaction in favour of Home Rule, and how that reaction was checked and the second Home Rule Bill decisively defeated. Incidentally we shall also see how the informal alliance with the "Liberal Unionists" began to have an effect on the general policy of the Conservative Party, and how a development of the utmost importance took place in the history of the Trade Union Movement.

§ 216. How Randolph Churchill "forgot Goschen."—When Lord Salisbury made up his second ministry after the rejection of Home Rule in 1886, he had perforce to find a place for Lord Randolph Churchill, the "incomparable *frondeur*," whose daring raids in the debates of the last Parliament had done so

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much to bring about the defeat of the Liberals. But it was a very bold step to make him Chancellor of the Exchequer, for nobody had ever credited Lord Randolph with any taste for hard facts and harder figures, and his own affairs were well-known to be embarrassed by his lack of business ability. At the Exchequer, however, he soon showed that public and private finance are very different things, and that the system which entrusts the offices of State to "amateurs" in the arts of government is not so absurd as it might appear. As soon as he had been instructed by his permanent officials in the difference between a decimal point and a full stop, he quickly grasped the essentials of Budget making. He determined to use his opportunity to carry out a definite policy. He was an ardent social reformer, and in a speech at Dartford in the autumn of 1886 he set forth an ambitious programme which was nearly as alarming to his leader as Chamberlain's "Unauthorised Programme" had been to Gladstone earlier in the year. Now, social reforms cost money, and involve retrenchments in other directions—especially in the fighting forces. This was an almost impossible demand in a Conservative Cabinet, but Churchill was confident that his colleagues would have to give way to him in the absence of any one able to take his place. When the ministers in charge of the Army and Navy declined to accept the reductions in expenditure that he required he impetuously sent in his resignation. To his chagrin it was quietly accepted by Lord Salisbury, who had by this time fully realised that Churchill was going to be an uncomfortable colleague. The appointment was offered to Goschen, who had been a member of the Liberal Cabinet of 1868-74, but had parted company with Gladstone over the County Franchise. He proved an able and business-like Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Randolph Churchill's career as a statesman came to a premature close.

At about the same time Lord Salisbury himself took over the Foreign Office, where he reigned supreme, with one short interval, almost till his death in 1902. It has always been a tradition that the Prime Minister, who is responsible for the policy of the Cabinet as a whole, shall content himself with the almost nominal duties of the First Lord of the Treasury, leaving to his colleagues those offices which engross the whole of a minister's time and attention. Salisbury became more and more the hermit of the Foreign Office, and left much of the general management of the Government's

business to his chief of staff who led the House of Commons—whom, it is said, he did not even know by sight.

Another important step was taken when Salisbury selected his nephew Arthur Balfour to carry out the Irish policy which the Conservatives proposed to substitute for Home Rule. People who only knew Balfour as the highly-cultured but rather lackadaisical young man who had “adorned” the Fourth Party were amazed at the appointment; but appearances were deceptive, and the Irish members who had at first ridiculed the new Chief Secretary as a “tiger-lily” and the “darling of perfumed drawing-rooms” were before long vituperating him as “Bloody Balfour.” 1884

§ 217. “Resolute Government” in Ireland.—He found himself face to face with a new development of Irish agrarian agitation. In the autumn of 1886 Parnell’s principal lieutenants, Healy, Dillon, and O’Brien (he himself being laid aside by illness) adopted what was known as “The Plan of Campaign.” This was a scheme for fighting the landlords with their own rents. All the tenants on an estate were to come to an agreement amongst themselves as to what was a fair rent to offer their landlord; if the latter refused to accept this they were to put the money into a general fund to protect the tenants and resist evictions.

The Prime Minister had declared that what Ireland required was not autonomy, but twenty years of resolute government; and there was no lack of resolution about the methods adopted by his nephew in dealing with this illegal “Plan of Campaign.” He drew up the most drastic Coercion Bill that had ever been brought before Parliament. Since Irish juries would not convict their countrymen of offences against the Land Laws, he placed such offences in the almost uncontrolled jurisdiction of resident magistrates, who usually knew very little of the law, and were removable at the pleasure of the Government. Furthermore, instead of being temporary in its effect, as all such measures had been in the past, “The Crimes Act” of 1887 was to be permanent. 1887

Naturally, there was a great outcry from Nationalists and Liberals, and many even of the Conservatives were taken aback. General Sir Redvers Buller, who had been sent to take charge of a district in Western Ireland, soon came to the conclusion that the peasants could not possibly pay their rents. As he said, “You have here a very ignorant, poor people; the Government ought

to do something for them, instead of which it merely looks after the rich." This attitude did not commend itself to the Government, and employment was found elsewhere for the plain-speaking soldier.

§ 208 In order to support the Government in getting the Bill passed into law, *The Times* brought out a series of articles on "Parnellism and Crime," suggesting that the Irish Party were deeply implicated in the violence and bloodshed in Ireland during the past decade. On the very day when the Crimes Act was to come up for its second reading there appeared in *The Times* what purported to be the facsimile of a letter signed by Parnell, apologising to supporters for the fact that public decency compelled him to disown the Phoenix Park murders. Parnell denied all knowledge of the letter, but his political opponents regarded *The Times* as almost infallible, and Salisbury spoke in severe terms of Gladstone for having entered into political alliance with such a man.

§ 206 The Government got its Crimes Act through, partly by means of the feeling caused by these letters, and partly by a new and more drastic method of dealing with Parliamentary obstruction. By the "Guillotine" system, any clauses of a Bill that had not been dealt with by a certain date were to be voted on without discussion. Only a few years before, Conservatives had been horrified and Liberals dismayed by Gladstone's introduction of the "Closure," which merely enabled the Speaker to bring to an end an obviously exhausted debate on a particular clause. Thus in five years the Irish had succeeded in bringing down the whole fabric of parliamentary government upon their own heads.

Meanwhile, Balfour went on his way unperturbed by the fierce attacks of the Opposition. He let it be known that he would defend any member of the magistracy or the constabulary who erred by excess of zeal, and that the one unforgivable sin would be slackness in carrying out the Crimes Act. Even Members of Parliament who ventured to speak in favour of boycotting or of The Plan of Campaign were sent to prison as common criminals. Ireland was the only country in the world (except perhaps Russia) where political offenders were treated in prison like thieves. To Balfour, Irish nationalism was simply sentimental nonsense, and he refused to make any distinction between various categories of law-breakers. By the end of 1887

six of the Irish members were undergoing various terms of imprisonment at the same time.

§ 218. **The Liberal Unionists Leaven the Conservative Lump.**—Both of the chief members of the Liberal Party who had left it over Home Rule had ruined their political prospects in so doing. To Lord Hartington this mattered little, for he was as 1833- devoid of personal ambition as Parnell (with whom, indeed, his 1908 temperament had much in common), and he was a representative of the old-fashioned Whigs whose outlook was not very different from that of modern Conservatives. But to Chamberlain there 1836- was a real sacrifice, for he had always been an advanced Radical, 1912 he had been unsparing in his attacks on the Conservative leaders, and Salisbury had likened him to Jack Cade. His chance of carrying through his democratic schemes seemed very remote now that he was ploughing a lonely furrow. Nevertheless, as leader of the Liberal-Unionist group in the House of Commons, whose support was very valuable to the Government, his influence soon became evident in several aspects of public policy. Amongst these may be mentioned the first Colonial Conference in 1887, the County Councils Act of 1888, and Free Elementary Education in 1891.

The most important piece of legislation of the period was the establishment of County Councils. Like Free Education, this 1888 was the natural corollary of a previous Whig-Liberal reform—the Municipal Act of 1834. Hitherto, while towns had had § 62 elective councils, all the functions of Local Government had in rural districts been in the hands of magistrates nominated by the Lords Lieutenant of the counties. Henceforth, they were to be carried out by representative bodies elected by the rate-payers. The time-honoured Quarter Sessions had on the whole carried on their work efficiently and economically, but a system under which country rate-payers had no control over the spending of the money they provided was a strange anomaly in a modern democracy. The Quarter Sessions continued to sit as a court of justice, but the management of roads, drains, bridges, and so forth, passed into the hands of the County Councils.

One particularly noteworthy outcome of the Act was the formation of a County of London, with a council of its own. Hitherto the mother of cities had been mismanaged by a chaotic welter of vestries, and all common interests were controlled by the Metropolitan Board of Works, the members of which were



elected by the vestries and only very indirectly responsible to the rate-payers. The first Chairman of the L.C.C. was Lord Rosebery, and many able citizens who had gained distinction in various walks of life became members.

§ 219. *The New Trade Unionism.*—Important to the general welfare of the people as was the Act creating County Councils, an even more significant development was taking place contemporaneously outside the walls of Parliament. Hitherto the trade unions had played but a minor part in the social fabric of the country; they were in the main friendly societies of skilled workmen, with no definite political ideas or aims. But towards the end of the 'eighties a new spirit began to take possession of the leaders. Instead of confining their attention to improving the conditions under the existing economic system they began to aim at revolutionary changes in the basis of that system which they believed would lift the whole working class—and especially the mass of unskilled labourers—to a higher standard of living, and would make an end of the desperate struggle for existence between man and man and between Capital and Labour. From this time the Trade Union Movement became more and more indoctrinated with Socialism; it sought to get representatives elected to Parliament, and to Town and County Councils, as the first step towards a realisation of its ideals.

The apostles of this new departure were Ben Tillett, H. H. Champion, Tom Mann, John Burns, and Will Thorne, and it was signalised by an epoch-making strike of the London dock labourers. Tillett had formed a union of his fellow-workers at the docks, that they might collectively resist the abominable system under which they worked. When a ship came in the dock company gave a sort of contract for the unloading and loading to a middleman, who engaged "hands" for the job at the rate of 4*d.* an hour. As the work required no special training, the competition for employment was almost unlimited. Moreover, it was purely casual: a man might be employed for a few hours on Monday, and then have to wait about till Thursday or Friday for another chance to earn a shilling or two. Scenes of bestial ferocity were often seen when a ship came in, hundreds of men struggling to get, from a contractor protected by iron bars, the tickets that would entitle them to a modicum of work and wages. The whole system was in the last degree demoralising to all concerned.

To organise a union out of such men as these dockers was obviously a tremendous undertaking, and still greater was the difficulty of getting them to stand by it; but Tillett ("twenty-seven and a fanatic," as he described himself) succeeded at last; and in August, 1889, he called them out on strike. His demand was for sixpence an hour, and a regular roster for employment in spells of not less than four hours. There followed a struggle which was watched with interest by the whole civilised world. The strike leaders, Tillett and Mann and Burns, succeeded in restraining the men from any serious acts of violence, but they managed to "picket" the whole nine miles of the docks, and effectually prevented the use of "black-leg" labour. This orderliness made a great impression on the public, and brought the strikers much practical support. The Dean of St. Paul's opened a fund to feed the wives and children; Australia alone contributed £4,000 to the "war-chest." The great business firms of the city were equally sympathetic, and when the shipping companies began to talk of taking over the lading of their ships themselves, the surrender of the dock companies was inevitable.

The whole incident was significant for several reasons. It showed the general public that even unskilled and casual workers could make a firm stand for their own welfare under the new type of labour leader; it proved that a strike could be conducted to a successful issue with self-restraint and dignity (something like £50,000 was distributed in strike pay by an almost spontaneous organisation with little or no leakage); it showed that when public opinion is favourable to the claims of Labour, even old vested interests cannot stand against them; it brought out the fact that the inability of the dock companies to pay decent wages was largely due to their stupid rivalry amongst themselves, for which a cure had to be found; and it inaugurated the new era of Socialist trade unionism.

§ 220. Figgott and Parnell.—Meanwhile there was a dramatic development in the Irish imbroglio. Parnell had asked the Government to appoint a Select Committee to inquire into the charges brought by *The Times*, but this was refused. After some delay, Salisbury offered to place the matter before a Judicial Commission. This consisted of three judges, all political opponents of Parnell, and at the last moment its instructions were widened to include an inquiry into the charges made against

"other persons" as well as Parnell. The Commission thus became a sort of trial of the Irish nation, but Parnell had no choice but to accept this form of inquiry or go without any at all. The judges sat for more than a year off and on, they heard over five hundred witnesses of all sorts and conditions, and it was six months before they came to the subject that the public was really interested in—the authenticity of the letters published in *The Times*. Then the most amazing story was told in the witness-box. It appeared that *The Times* had spent thousands of pounds in trying to find evidence against Parnell, and that these letters had been bought at a very high price from an out-of-work journalist of doubtful reputation named Piggott, with no inquiry whatever into the source whence he had obtained them. Piggott's evidence was torn to tatters in cross-examination by Sir Charles Russell, Parnell's counsel, and the wretched man fled to Spain, where he committed suicide to avoid arrest.

Neither *The Times* nor Lord Salisbury made any adequate apology for the wrong they had done Parnell, but from now onwards there grew up a rapid revulsion of feeling in his favour and in favour of the movement which he represented. Many old-fashioned Liberals began to rally round their "G.O.M." again, now that it seemed that the only alternative to his policy was perpetual coercion, with prison suits and plank beds for opponents of the Government. Many Conservatives, too, began to protest against the harsh application of the Crimes Act, and in 1891 Balfour put through a Land Purchase Act, by which the Government undertook to lend tenants money up to a total of twenty millions sterling to enable them to buy their holdings from such landlords as were willing to sell. The Act also set up "Congested District Boards," which did much to improve methods of agriculture and to revive cottage industries.

Nevertheless the by-elections went steadily against the Government; Liberal hearts beat high, and it looked as if the forthcoming General Election would give Gladstone such a majority as would enable him to accomplish the task which kept him "chained to the oar." Then came a bolt from the blue. Parnell was cited as co-respondent in a divorce suit brought by Captain O'Shea, a former member of the Irish Party. He made no defence, and the suit was allowed. It is not very easy to see what bearing the private character of any particular man could have on the case for or against Irish self-government, but the

incident had disastrous effects, both on the Nationalists and on their Liberal allies. The Free Churches formed the backbone of the Liberal Party, and the "Nonconformist conscience" was horrified at the thought of co-operating with a man who had been found out in a serious offence against morals. Strong pressure was put upon Gladstone to throw over the Home Rule cause altogether unless the Irish Party would dismiss the culprit from his position as their leader. Parnell had always had a haughty contempt for English politicians, and he was furious at this attitude. The great majority of his own supporters begged him to retire, if only for a time, but he indignantly refused to be dictated to. Thereupon the dissentients broke away and elected a chairman of their own, and the Nationalist Party was split into Parnellites and Anti-Parnellites. Personal animosities quickly embittered the controversy beyond all hope of reconciliation. Parnell made desperate efforts to rally the Irish nation to himself, but the Catholic Church had always looked rather askance at him as a heretic, and it now seized the opportunity to repudiate him altogether. The opposition of the priests proved a decisive factor in the struggle. Within a year he had worn and worried himself to death, leaving the edifice he had built up with such sagacity and determination a mere shattered ruin.

§ 221. "An Old Man in a Hurry."—Thus, when the Parliament of 1886 had run its course, and another General Election was in sight, the country was equally dissatisfied with "Resolute Government" and with the prospect of Home Rule. The very completeness with which the Catholic Church had obliterated Parnell's influence lent additional force to the argument that Home Rule meant Rome Rule—the handing over of Irish Protestants, and especially the Presbyterians of Ulster, to the tender mercies of a hierarchy controlled by a foreign potentate. Nevertheless, Gladstone, who dwarfed all his colleagues by his unique advantages in experience and renown—so much so that Triton could hardly realise any distinction in importance or character amongst such minnows—was entirely obsessed by his idea of bringing peace to Ireland by a measure of autonomy. Certainly, a few other items were added to the Liberal "Programme" at a party meeting held at Newcastle in 1891, but these were even less likely to be generally popular than Home Rule itself. By the proposal to disestablish both the Welsh (Anglican) and the Scottish (Presbyterian) Churches they

succeeded in alienating both Churchmen and Nonconformists; while the adoption of "Local Veto" (under which a two-thirds majority in any parish could close all the public houses in it) turned every bar parlour in the land into an unofficial Conservative committee room.

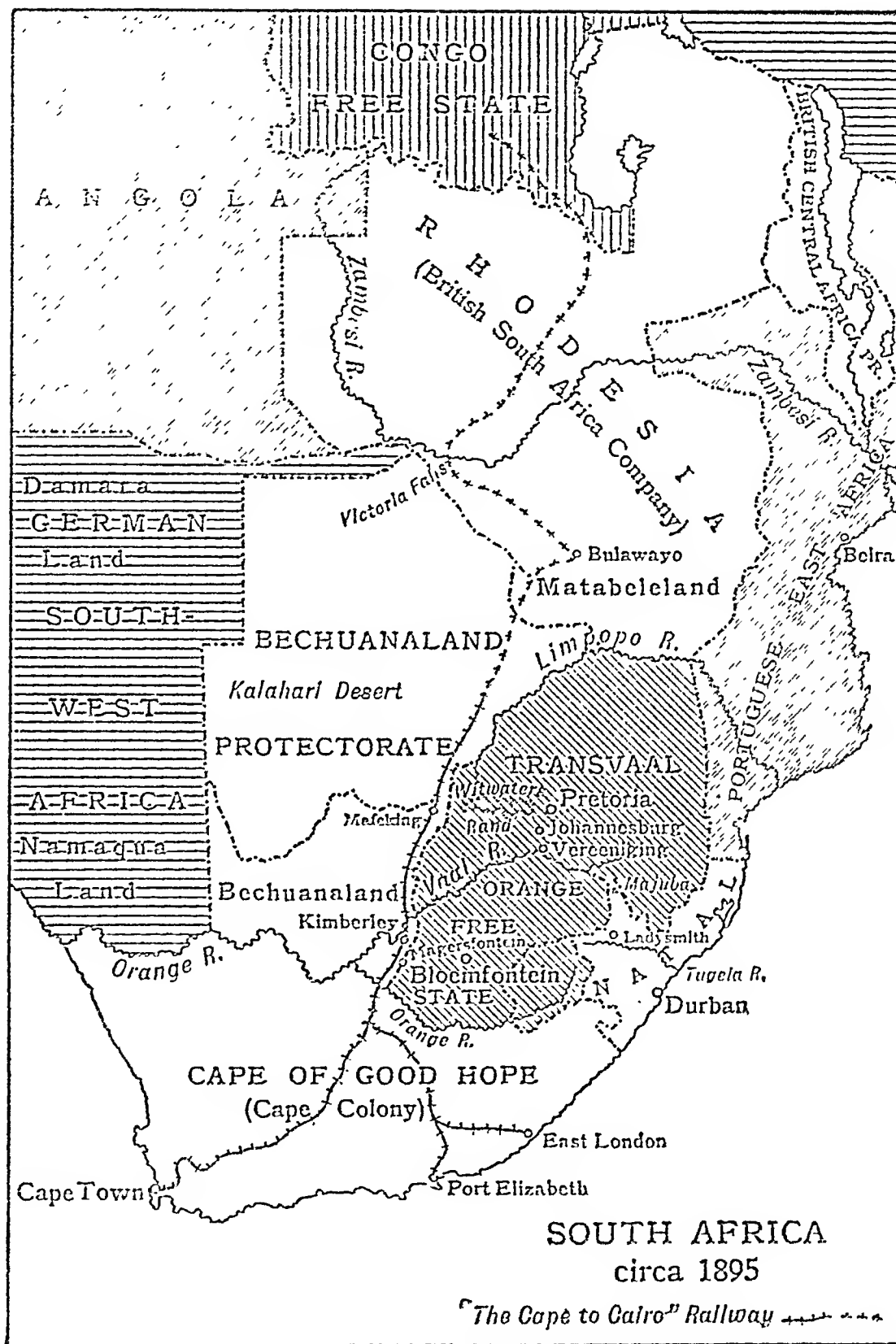
§ 209 Thus the Election of 1892 gave the Liberals a majority of no more than forty-six, and the Irish members—divided amongst themselves as they were—once more held the fate of British Governments in their hands. The Salisbury Government was defeated on the Address, and Gladstone formed his fourth Administration. He lost no time in preparing a second Home Rule Bill, and introduced it into the House in February, 1893. Randolph Churchill had taunted him with being "an old man in a hurry," and the phrase had more of truth than of kindness in it. Even "The Grand Old Man's" matchless elasticity of body and of spirit were at last giving way before advancing old age; as he himself said, "the gates of the senses were closing." His opponents were young and could afford to play for time, but for him the thing must be done at once or it would never be done at all. Truly during this spring of 1893 he gave a wonderful display of energy and resource for a man of eighty-four, but one question above all seemed to present an insoluble problem. If the Irish members were to sit at Westminster as well as at Dublin they would be taking a part in English and Scottish affairs that English and Scottish members could not take in Irish affairs; if they were not to do so, Ireland would have to pay Imperial taxation without representation in the Imperial Parliament; and if they came in for Imperial affairs and went out for those that merely concerned England and Scotland it might well happen that a Ministry could count on a majority on certain days of the week, but be heavily defeated on the others. And over all the debates and consultations and divisions there hung an air of unreality, for every one knew that whatever happened to the Bill in the Commons it was sure to be rejected in summary fashion by the Lords. In the end it passed the Lower House by a majority of something over forty, but was thrown out in the Upper by nearly ten votes to one. The Upas-tree which Gladstone had attacked with such buoyant vigour a quarter of a century before had proved too tough for his axe after all. He retired from the Premiership soon afterwards, and the House in which he had sat for sixty years knew him no more. When he

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died, in 1898, a political opponent spoke of him as "the greatest member of the greatest deliberative assembly the world has known."

### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Show how personal circumstances affected the history of the two Home Rule Bills.
2. What was the peculiar importance of the Dock Strike?
3. What do you consider would have been the best solution of the Irish problem?



## CHAPTER XXXVIII

### Imperialism in South Africa

"This is what England must do, or she will perish: she must found colonies as fast and as far as she is able, formed of her most energetic and worthiest men; seizing every piece of fruitful waste ground she can set her foot on, and there teaching these her colonists that their chief virtue is to be fidelity to their country, and that their first aim is to be to advance the power of England by land and sea. . . . If we can get men for little pay to cast themselves against cannon-mouths for love of England, we may find men also who will plough and sow for her, who will behave kindly and righteously for her, and who will bring up their children to love her, and who will gladden themselves in the brightness of her glory, more than in all the light of tropical skies."—RUSKIN, *Oxford Lectures*.

IMPORTANT as was the part that Britain played in the partition of tropical Africa, the most significant effect of the new Imperialism was the extension of the dominion of South Africa right up to the Lakes. To a large extent this was the work of one remarkable man, in whose personality that impulse reached its culmination. In the end, after the death of that man, the vision to which he devoted his life—the federal union of a Greater South Africa, with Dutchman and Briton living side by side as its citizens and taking an equal pride in its well-being—was in a fair way of being realised; but the path to that realisation was darkened by incidents which show that lofty ideals are not incompatible with unscrupulous methods in attaining them, and by the most destructive war in which this country had been involved since the Crimean. We shall also see the imperialist spirit of the age embodied in the statesman who for eight years dominated the counsels of Great Britain.

§ 222. Cecil Rhodes and Bechuanaland.—Cecil Rhodes was 1853–the son of a Hertfordshire clergyman; between school and 1902 college he had been sent out to South Africa to cure a weakness of



the lungs. His whole life was dominated by a sort of religious faith, compounded of the ideas conveyed by Ruskin at the head of this chapter, of the theory of Evolution (then still an exciting novelty), and of his own early experiences in South Africa. To bring as much as possible of the surface of the globe under the sway of the highest type that Evolution had produced (namely, the Anglo-Saxon race) was to act as the instrument of a beneficent Providence. His own personal aim was to bring about a development of a United States of South Africa under the Union Jack. This State was to look to the British Navy for protection, but otherwise it was to be autonomous, entirely free from the Colonial Office meddling and muddling which had been  
 § 85 so disastrous in the past; and all racial differences between Briton and Dutchman were to be sunk in one great united South African nation.

Haunted by these dreams, he came back to the diamond diggings at Kimberley in 1878, and was soon on the road to wealth. Two years later he became a member of the Cape Parliament, where he attached himself to the Dutch Party under Jan Hofmeyr. Soon a crisis arose which threatened to destroy all his plans. The only route from Cape Colony to the north lay through Bechuanaland, along the track used by hunters, traders, and missionaries for half a century. The country through which it ran, between the borders of the Transvaal Republic and the pathless Kalahari desert, had become the scene of desperate wars between native tribes, and the whole country became unsafe for travellers. The Colonial Office refused to intervene, nor would it allow the Transvaal to do so. Moreover, Germany had recently proclaimed a Protectorate over Namaqualand the eastward limits of which were undefined; if they were held to include Bechuanaland, all access to the interior would be cut off for the British. Rhodes urged the Cape Parliament to take over the district; but it was deterred by the cost, and had no sympathy with dreams of expansion. Eventually he had to be satisfied with seeing the Imperial Government, stimulated by the German danger, declare a Protectorate over Bechuanaland  
 1884 as a whole, and make the southern part of it a Crown Colony. The immediate danger was thus averted, but not by the means which Rhodes favoured. He now fully realised that to attain his ultimate objects he must have the power that only great wealth can give. At this time his income was a mere £50,000 a year—

enough to keep the wolf from the door, but only a trifle compared with what his schemes required.

§ 223. "Rhodesia."—For the next three years Rhodes was absorbed in "putting money in his purse." By a process of absorption and amalgamation he got the whole of the Kimberley diamond fields under the control of the De Beers Consolidated Mines, of which he was chairman; he cut down working expenses to a minimum, abolished competition in prices, and made an end of over-production. By 1890 his personal income was something like a million a year. 1890-1895

He had been anxious to keep open what he called "the Suez Canal" through Bechuanaland because it led to a magnificent stretch of country which he foresaw was capable of great development; and he was now in a position to carry that development out. There was no hope that the Government would undertake the responsibility, so he set to work to do it by a semi-private enterprise on the lines of the old East India Company. He bargained with Lo Bengula, the Matabele chieftain who ruled the best part of the country, for a concession to work the minerals in it, and spent great sums in buying out rival concessionaires, genuine and otherwise. He then came to England to get the necessary sanction from the Government. Here he met with a good deal of opposition, for Bradlaugh and the Aborigines Protection Society objected to putting the natives under the control of dividend-hunting speculators, while Chamberlain and the imperialists were deeply distrustful of the man who in the Cape Parliament had proclaimed his hostility to Colonial Office control over Bechuanaland. He made friends with the Irish Party, however, for Home Rule fitted in exactly with his idea of a federal Empire; and he subscribed £10,000 to their funds on condition that the next Home Rule Bill provided for Ireland to be represented at Westminster. Eventually he succeeded in getting a Charter which authorised his company to extend the railway and telegraph to the Zambesi (one of his dreams had always been an "all-red" railway route from the Cape to Cairo), to encourage trade and colonisation, and to develop the mineral resources of the whole country from the northern boundary of Cape Colony to the Lakes. In 1890 he sent up a band of pioneers, consisting of Dutch as well as British, to take possession. The question of the western boundary was shortly afterwards settled by the Governments, and he came to an agreement with the 1889

Portuguese by which he was able to develop their port at Beira, and so reduce the distance of the new territory from the sea by four-fifths.

In 1893 a war with the Matabele broke out. The unfortunate Lo Bengula found that an ell had been taken where he had only given an inch. He had no intention of giving up his authority over his subjects the Mashonas, amongst whom the new-comers had settled; but when he exercised it in his customary manner by fire and slaughter, the colonists intervened. Moreover, Rhodes' pioneers became dissatisfied with the comparatively poor lands that had been assigned to them, and cast envious eyes on the splendid uplands where the Matabele maintained the finest herd of cattle in Africa. In these circumstances war was inevitable, and equally inevitable was the defeat and death of Lo Bengula, and the lapse of all his lands into the undisputed possession of the Chartered Company. Finally, in 1895 the whole country between the Limpopo and the Lakes received by Royal Proclamation the name "Rhodesia."

§ 224. The "Uitlanders."—As Rhodes himself remarked to a friend, "to have a bit of country named after one is one of the things a man might be proud of," and this was the zenith of his career. His triple position as Prime Minister of the Cape (since 1890), controller of the world's diamond output, and almost a despot over a country three times the size of France, gave him enormous power. But pride goes before a fall.

§ 193 A great difficulty in the way of his schemes for a united South Africa was the existence of the two Boer Republics. He hoped that in time he would be able to get them to join a Federation under the British flag for such purposes as customs, railway organisation, and the post office, while leaving them complete independence under their own republican constitution in all domestic matters. The Orange Free State had shown signs of being amenable, but not so the Transvaal, where old President Kruger, a survivor of the Great Trek, detested the English and all their ways, and was extremely suspicious of Rhodes' designs on his country. The situation was complicated by the fact that a rich gold mine had recently been discovered on the Witwatersrand, in the south-western corner of the Transvaal. People had already gathered there from all quarters of the globe; and, unlike the sturdy pioneers who had taken part in the gold-rushes to California in 1849 and to Australia in 1854, these were mainly

§ 85

city-bred adventurers who imported up-to-date machinery for extracting the gold by the cyanide process, the manual labour being performed by negroes. Within a few years Johannesburg had grown from a tiny farm-hamlet into a modern city, and the new industry had increased the revenue of the Republic from £170,000 to £3,000,000. The type of civilisation represented by the immigrants disgusted the puritanical Boers of the older generation, and their numbers grew so rapidly that, in order to prevent their getting complete control of the Transvaal Government and upsetting the established order of things, Kruger passed a law which made it almost impossible for a foreigner to become a citizen of the Republic.

Thus the position of the "Uitlanders" was a flagrant violation of the principle of "No taxation without representation." They paid nineteen-twentieths of the revenue with no influence whatever over the spending of it. Enormous rates were levied in Johannesburg without the payers getting the least value for their money—not a drain, not a street lamp, not a school for their children. They were ruthlessly fleeced by special taxes, and by monopolies granted by the President to the European Dutchmen whom he imported to assist him in the government. Railway rates were raised to prohibitive heights, and when the Uitlanders tried to bring in their supplies by road, the President closed the "drifts" or fords across the Vaal. Even the Cape Dutch were alienated from the Boer Government by these vexatious restrictions, which were hampering the trade of the whole of South Africa.

§ 225. The Raid.—Not unnaturally, perhaps, the Uitlanders, 1895 since they had no constitutional means of redress, began to think of overturning the Boer Government by a *coup d'état*. Rhodes was in close touch with the leading spirits among them, for he had great financial interests in the goldfields. He thought he saw in their discontent an opportunity for clearing away the great obstacle to his designs. He undertook to smuggle arms and ammunition into the country at his own expense, and to support the revolution by a raid of 1,500 armed men in the service of the Chartered Company, under the command of his trusted lieutenant Dr. Jameson, the administrator of Rhodesia.

Rhodes was drawn into this foolish and utterly unjustifiable plot, partly by his anxiety lest the almost inevitable rising should take some form incompatible with his schemes, partly by his

impatience to see those schemes fulfilled before he died (for he had been warned by the doctors that he had not long to live), and partly by the fact that he had been spoiled by success, and was surrounded by flatterers who screened him from hard facts. As the time drew near for the project to be carried out he began to realise the difficulties involved. The Uitlanders were far from being unanimously in favour of it, and some who were in favour of it were altogether averse to coming under the Cape Government—they wanted to control the Transvaal themselves. Rhodes instructed Jameson to postpone the raid until the Johannesburgers had got their end of the business more developed ; but Jameson was impatient of delay, confident of success, and anxious lest the secret should leak out. On the night of December 30th, 1895, he “rode in,” accompanied by about a quarter of the men agreed upon as necessary. The Uitlanders had made no preparations to support him, and his party was surrounded and disarmed by the Boer militia with almost ludicrous ease.

This was a shattering blow to all that Rhodes held most dear. Many of the Boers themselves had been opposed to Kruger's policy, but this party was now silenced. The British had put themselves in the wrong in the eyes of the world, as was shown by the congratulatory telegram which the German Emperor sent to the President. Rhodes was no longer able to maintain his political alliance with the Cape Dutch, and the racial cleavage against which he had always worked was now deeper than ever. The dignity and authority of the Cape Government was dragged in the mire by the conduct of its Premier, and the prestige of the Empire itself was severely compromised, not only by the hatching of the plot, but by its ignominious failure. Jameson had indeed “upset the apple-cart,” as Rhodes himself said when he heard the news.

Perhaps “the most unkindest cut of all” was that the Boer Government was given a chance to be contemptuously magnanimous. They waived their right to punish the offenders ; the rank and file were pardoned, and the ringleaders were handed over to the British authorities. After a trial at the Old Bailey Jameson was sentenced to eighteen months' imprisonment. A Committee of Inquiry censured Rhodes for his share in the business, but no charge was ever made against him—in fact he and “Dr. Jim” were the heroes of the hour with the general public, in whose eyes “Imperialism” seemed to justify even a treacherous

attack on a neighbouring state at the instigation of a colonial Premier. Rhodes returned to the Cape to pick up the broken threads of his policy as best he could, but he was compelled to resign both his Premiership and his Chairmanship of the Chartered Company.

The Boers now began to make undisguised preparations for a war with Great Britain. They imported arms and ammunition of the latest pattern (paid for out of taxes wrung from the luckless Uitlanders), and engaged officers from the French and German armies to train and organise their forces. Had the negotiations been in the hands of the British Prime Minister and the Boer President themselves, it is quite possible that war might have been averted, for Salisbury and Kruger were a pair of shrewd and cautious old Tories; but the latter was dominated by ambitious professional politicians from Europe, and the British side of the dispute was in the hands of Joseph Chamberlain.

§ 226. **The Rosebery Ministry.**—We must now make a digression to home politics. Upon the retirement of Gladstone a rift within the Liberal lute had at once become apparent. The main body of the party, represented in the Cabinet chiefly by Sir William Harcourt and John Morley, held by the old Liberal watchwords, "Peace, Retrenchment, and Reform"; but an influential section which included many of younger generation, such as Asquith, Haldane, and Grey, favoured a "forward" policy in foreign and Imperial affairs which seemed to old-fashioned Liberals to be incompatible with either peace or economy. The Queen appointed Lord Rosebery, well known to belong to the "imperialistic" wing, to succeed Gladstone, passing over Harcourt, a much older and more experienced man. The latter, though clear-headed, staunch, and warm-hearted, was difficult to get on with owing to his somewhat arrogant manner and overbearing temper. Thus the situation within the re-constituted Ministry did not promise much stability or strength. Harcourt as Chancellor of the Exchequer and Leader of the Commons was responsible for its only notable achievement. This was the Budget of 1894, which embodied a striking development of what were called "The Death Duties," a tax levied on inheritances. These were henceforth to be paid on Real as well as Personal Estate (another blow at the old privileges of the landed classes), and were to be graduated from 1 per cent. on estates under £500 to 15 per cent. on those over a million. The outcry from the

Opposition against this "robbery of the dead" was long and loud, and the Prime Minister himself damned the measure with very faint praise; but Harcourt fought for his Budget with unwonted tact as well as with characteristic pertinacity, and he succeeded in getting it passed without the use of Closure or Guillotine. No finance minister of either party has ever dreamed of giving up the very valuable source of revenue which it provided.

Meanwhile the quarrel in the Cabinet was becoming acute. For months at a time the Prime Minister only communicated with his Leader of the House of Commons by means of frigid notes. When, therefore, the Government was defeated in a snap division on a side issue, Rosebery seized with alacrity his opportunity to resign, to the great relief of everybody concerned.

1895 § 227. Chamberlain at the Colonial Office.—The general election which followed gave the Conservatives a substantial majority, which seemed to justify the Lords in throwing out the Home Rule Bill. The chief feature of the Third Salisbury Ministry was that the "Liberal Unionists" now took office; and so complete did the fusion become that the very name of the party was changed from "Conservative" to "Unionist." The Duke of Devonshire (our old friend Hartington, who had succeeded to the title in 1892) held but a sleeping partnership in the firm as Lord President of the Council; but Chamberlain quickly raised the Colonial Secretaryship—hitherto regarded as somewhat out of the political limelight—into a foremost position in the public eye. Indeed, the ten years of Unionist rule were mainly filled with the Imperialistic idea embodied by him. The bold and enterprising Radicalism of the early 'eighties was now directed into this channel, a fact which was clearly shown by his choice of the Colonial Secretaryship when any of the great offices of State were open to him (except that of Foreign Secretary, again filled by Salisbury himself).

The Empire had hitherto grown up with very little interference from the Home Government, and this fact had been favourable to the development of the great dominions in the temperate zones. The Crown Colonies, on the other hand, which were mainly populated by backward races and were ruled from Whitehall, had not fared so well under this system of deliberate neglect; and the new Colonial Secretary set himself to reverse it. He shared to the full the admiration current among the educated classes in Britain for the Germans with their ideals of

methodical efficiency and super-organisation. He looked upon tropical Africa and the West Indian Islands as estates to be developed for the mutual benefit of the inhabitants and the Mother Country. The hampering squabbles with France as to 1898 West African boundaries were settled, money was found for constructing railways to the coast, and Schools of Tropical Medicine were set up in London and at Liverpool for research 1899 and the training of specialist medical officers; communications with the West Indies were improved, methods of sugar-production brought up to date, and fruit-growing encouraged by the establishment of an Institute for Botanical Research at Kew Gardens with stations in the Islands.

§ 228. Steps to War in South Africa.—But it was the South African imbroglio that offered the greatest scope for Chamberlain's methods and policy. He saw the issue in its broadest form: a struggle for supremacy in South Africa as a whole. One of the two white races must become subordinate to the other in the end, and it was not to be thought of that the underdogs should be the British. The hope of seeing a prosperous South Africa united under the British flag gradually hardened into a determination to get this vexed matter settled once for all. In 1898 the Uitlanders petitioned the Queen to intervene with President Kruger, and it was felt that it would be highly discreditable to the British Government that their grievances should go unredressed. Kruger was induced to agree to a Conference with Sir Alfred Milner, the High Commissioner in South Africa, to be held at Bloemfontein. The Boer President offered to make considerable concessions as to the franchise, but demanded in return an agreement that any future dispute should be submitted to arbitration. This proposal sounded fair enough, but it was really tantamount to a recognition of the complete independence of the Transvaal, for no Mother Country could submit to a third party points in dispute between itself and a dependency. The question of the precise relationship between the Republic and Great Britain, which had been allowed to sleep since 1884, was thus § 197 raised in an acute form. The Government required from Kruger an explicit recognition of the suzerainty of the Queen, and the Conference broke up with war already in sight. British troops were moved up towards the frontiers, the Boers sent a peremptory ultimatum demanding that this should cease, and war was declared in October, 1899. The Orange Free State, though it



had no part in the actual quarrel, threw in its lot with its sister republic under a treaty of alliance signed a short time before.

The story of the war itself must be held over till our next chapter.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Explain clearly Rhodes' attitude towards (a) the Cape Dutch; (b) the Colonial Office; (c) the Boers; (d) Bechuanaland; (e) The Uitlanders. How far have his dreams been realised?
2. Draft a correspondence (four letters in all) between Chamberlain and Kruger on the subject of the Uitlanders.
3. What is the difference between "Dominions" and "Crown Colonies"? What are the conditions which permit a Crown Colony to develop into a Dominion? Make a list of the colonies.

## CHAPTER XXXIX

### Party Schisms

“Party is a body of men united, for promoting by their joint endeavours the national interest, upon some particular principle in which they are all agreed. . . . Men thinking freely will, in particular instances, think differently, but . . . no men can act in concert who do not think in concert; no men can act in concert who do not act with confidence; no men can act with confidence who are not bound together by common opinions, common affections, and common interests.”—BURKE.

IN this chapter we shall see how the imperialistic “urge” which was so strong at the end of the nineteenth century acted as a disruptive influence in both the political parties in Britain. A breach in the ranks of the Liberals on the subject had been widening all through the ‘nineties, and the South African War reduced them to a discredited and disunited faction. Then Joseph Chamberlain’s absorption in the idea of Imperial unity led him to take up the cause of “protection,” which at once disintegrated the forces of the Government and cemented those of the Opposition, and brought about the greatest cataclysm in our parliamentary history.

§ 229. **A Rude Awakening.**—It seemed at first sight to be a 1899 desperate step for two tiny republics, with a total population under 100,000, to defy the mighty British Empire, and in England it was at first expected that the war would be over in a month or two. As a matter of fact, the Boers were confident of success, and not without a certain amount of justification. They were not so highly trained as the professional soldiers whom they were fighting, but they knew the country, and their equipment and methods were admirably adapted for warfare in it; while a wide area with no important towns is always a very difficult proposition for an invading army, as the British found in the War of Independence, and as Napoleon found in Russia. Moreover, the

British troops had to be transported 6,000 miles by sea and then another 1,000 miles by land—a problem with which no army had been faced in the history of the world. Again, the Boërs  
 § 225 had learned the latest developments in the arts of warfare from their foreign instructors, while the British army had long rusted in inaction, except for demoralisingly easy victories over savages.

There were three distinct stages in the war. During the first, which lasted up to the end of 1899, the advantage lay entirely with the Boers. They at once took the initiative by laying siege to Ladysmith in Natal and to Kimberley in Cape Colony. The South African Field Force, under the command of Sir Redvers Buller, advanced against them in two main columns, with a third subsidiary force between them. In the course of one "black week" in December each of these forces met with disaster. The Kimberley column under Lord Methuen came upon the Boer trenches by night while marching in close order near Magersfontein, and lost almost the whole of the Highland Brigade within a few minutes. British troops now made their first acquaintance with some of the devices of modern warfare, such as concealed trenches and barbed-wire entanglements, and the whole column had to withdraw beyond the Modder River. Two days later General Gatacre's force was cut to pieces in an ambush at Stormberg; and a day or two after that Buller himself was repulsed with heavy loss while attempting to cross the Tugela River in the face of the enemy.

The news of these reverses had a sobering effect on public opinion at home. It was now realised that the war was not going to be the picnic that had been anticipated, and the glee with which our discomfiture was greeted by our continental neighbours was a revelation to us. The situation was faced with grim determination. Another army was sent out under Lord  
 § 235 Roberts, with Lord Kitchener (fresh from his victory over the Mahdi at Omdurman) as his Chief of Staff. Volunteer forces were raised: the Imperial Yeomanry, recruited from those who could ride and shoot, and the City Imperial Volunteers, raised and equipped by the City of London. Offers of help from the colonies were also accepted, and some of our foreign critics who had expected to see the Empire fall to pieces at the first touch of disaster had a disagreeable surprise.

1900 Then began the second stage of the war. The British had now a considerable preponderance in numbers; and instead of the

frontal attacks which had proved so ruinous, Roberts was able to turn the Boer positions by marching past their flanks and threatening their communications. It was a movement of this sort which compelled Cronje, who commanded the burghers at Magersfontein, to evacuate his trenches and make a dash for his base at Bloemfontein. He was cut off by Roberts at Paardeburg, and compelled to surrender, while French's Cavalry Division went on to relieve Kimberley. Soon afterwards Bloemfontein was occupied and the Orange Free State annexed by the Crown. Meanwhile, in Natal, Buller was reinforced sufficiently to be able to raise the siege of Ladysmith by similar tactics. Roberts was delayed for six weeks at Bloemfontein, much hampered by an outbreak of enteric fever amongst the troops, and by the fact that the surrounding country was still in possession of the enemy patrols; but he was ready to advance by the end of May, and a month later he entered Pretoria and the Transvaal Republic ceased to exist.

§ 230. "Clearing Up."—At home it was now felt that the war was practically over, since the Boers were without a base. Roberts returned, leaving the "clearing up" to Kitchener. But the third stage, which now began, lasted longer than the first two put together. The national temperament of the Boers, <sup>1902</sup> their arms, equipment, and training, and the nature of the country, <sup>1902</sup> were all admirably adapted for guerilla warfare by parties of mounted infantry, and for eighteen months they led the army a most unpleasant dance. One of their leaders, de Wet, became almost a hero to the British public for his audacity and elusiveness. Kitchener's chief difficulty in dealing with the situation was that these parties got supplies and information from the scattered farmhouses, and he was at last driven to lay waste broad belts of the country by destroying the Boer homesteads and providing for non-combatants in "concentration camps." Representatives of the extinct Republics came to Europe to try to induce the Powers to intervene on their behalf, but they found none of them willing to extend more than sympathy. The British Government was determined that the clash of races must be brought to an end in South Africa, by the complete surrender of the Boers; and the latter would not listen to any such suggestion while they had a man or rifle or a horse left. At length, in May, 1902, they had almost reached this stage; the last "Commandos" were rounded up, and their leaders came in to discuss terms of peace with Kitchener and Milner at Vereeniging. No

vestige of independence was left the Boers, but they were promised full rights of self-government under the British flag at the earliest possible moment. Rhodes did not live to see this realisation of his dreams, for he had died some months before at the age of forty-nine. After his death his wealth was used for the same purpose as in his lifetime, for by his will he founded a number of scholarships to bring together young men from all the English-speaking peoples at his own old University.

§ 231. *The Nadir of Liberalism.*—Meanwhile, the war had reacted most unfavourably on the general tone of politics in England. The Liberal Party was almost disintegrated by it altogether. Rosebery had retired from the leadership soon after its defeat in 1895, and had been succeeded by the chief member of the other wing, Sir William Harcourt; but the latter quickly found that, with Rosebery's house at Epsom becoming a sort of St. Germain for discontented Liberal Imperialists, his position was unbearable, and he too resigned. The thankless post now fell to Sir Henry Campbell-Bannerman, a shrewd, patient, 1836-  
1908-  
steadfast Scotsman, who was a staunch upholder of the old-fashioned Liberalism, the creed of the individualist "Manchester School," which said that he governed best who governed least, that the chief function of statesmen was to preserve liberty at home and peace abroad, that money was better left "to fructify in the pockets of the people" than spent in maintaining the armaments necessary to back up "a forward policy" in foreign and colonial affairs. The "Liberal Imperialists," on the other hand, felt that these ideas were now out of date; that the party "must appeal to sober-minded and level-headed men in all strata of humanity, and in all quarters of the King's dominions; it must convince the people that it is a national party to which they could safely entrust the fortunes of the Empire."<sup>1</sup>

Naturally, the war brought out these differences in an acute form. The attitude adopted by Campbell-Bannerman was a nice equipoise of judgment: the Government had been wrong to seek to extend the Empire by putting pressure on the Boers, but it was Kruger's ultimatum that had made the war inevitable; the Ministers had blundered into the war without adequate preparations, but the only thing for the country to do now was to concentrate on bringing it to a successful conclusion; the annexation of the republics was the only possible outcome, but

<sup>1</sup> Asquith.

the Government ought to show every readiness to enter into negotiations with our future fellow-subjects rather than harry them into unconditional surrender. But Campbell-Bannerman had great difficulty in restraining the disruptive tendencies of the "Lib. Imps.," who held that the Government had been right all through, and the "Pro-Boers," who were equally sure that it had been wrong. In any case, the nation as a whole, however discontented it might be at the mismanagement of the Ministers, was in no mood to listen to any talk of making terms with the Boers, and young Mr. Lloyd George was nearly killed after addressing a "Conciliation Meeting" at Birmingham; while "C.B." himself became extremely unpopular by using the words "methods of barbarism" to describe the system of farm-burning and concentration camps which marked the later stages of the war.

The Government took advantage of the disruption of the 1900 Opposition to dissolve Parliament in the middle of the war. The country could not express any disapproval of the Ministry without at the same time suggesting to the Boers and to the world in general that it was only half-hearted about bringing the war to a successful issue. The composition of the House after the "Khaki Election" was almost the same as before it, and the Liberals seemed to be condemned to wander in the wilderness indefinitely.

§ 232. *The Turn of the Tide.*—The end of the war (in April, 1902) was closely followed by the retirement of Lord Salisbury, owing to a breakdown in health which caused his death the next year. His successor, Balfour, signalled his first session as Premier by carrying through Parliament an Education Bill, which made 1902 an important advance in our national system. It abolished the old School Boards, and placed all State-aided schools under the control of "Education Committees" of Town and County Councils, it provided for the opening of Secondary Schools in places where none existed, and it constructed an "educational ladder" by which children with the necessary capacity and diligence could go through a complete course of study, Elementary, Secondary, and University, at practically no cost to their parents. Unfortunately, the Bill also caused Church schools to be supported out of the rates, and the Nonconformists rose in revolt against this "endowment of denominational schools," just as they had against Forster's Bill in 1870. When the Act came into force many § 174

of them became "Passive Resisters"—they refused to pay the rate, and were imprisoned in default. The Unionist Government thus appeared as "persecutors of martyrs" in the eyes of millions of Nonconformists, who therefore rallied to the Opposition, from which many of them had been estranged during the war.

An even greater diversion came to the aid of the Liberals in the following year. Chamberlain's enthusiasm for Imperial unity had taken a new direction after the Third Colonial Conference in 1902. The representatives of the Dominions (assembled in London on the occasion of the coronation of Edward VII) had once more thrown cold water on all ambitious schemes for Federation, but had suggested that it would be of advantage if a system of preferential duties could be arranged within the Empire. This idea of an Imperial Zollverein (the Customs Union which had done so much to promote the unity and strength of the German Empire) took possession of Chamberlain's mind. The great difficulty, as he realised, would be to overcome the belief in Free Trade which had become in the course of the last fifty years a second nature in the minds of the British people; but one circumstance in his favour was the fact that a nominal registration duty on corn of a shilling a quarter had been imposed without opposition by the Budget of 1902. By merely remitting this on colonial corn he would be able to get in the thin end of the wedge of "Preference" without arousing hostility, and further developments would thereafter be easy. Unfortunately for these plans, a new Chancellor of the Exchequer had been appointed in the re-organisation of the Ministry after the retirement of Salisbury. This was C. T. Ritchie, who was a convinced and determined Free Trader. When Chamberlain returned from a trip to South Africa in the following winter, he found that the shilling duty had been abolished in the Budget of 1903. This altered the whole position. He must now set to work to convert his colleagues and the country at large to a revolution in the fiscal system. At first his proposals were modest: he declared himself a Free Trader, merely asking for an inquiry into the possibilities of Colonial Preference; but the very suggestion aroused such passionate opposition and support from different sections of the community that his fighting spirit was aroused, and the plea for inquiry quickly developed into a "raging, tearing propaganda" for Protection pure and simple. No greater

piece of good fortune could have befallen the Opposition; "Liberal Imperialists" and "Little Englanders" forthwith forgot their differences and rallied round the banner of Free Trade.

§ 233. The "Tariff Reform" Agitation.—The raising of 1903-  
the question not merely closed the ranks of the Liberals; it 1905  
also opened a yawning breach in those of the Government. Balfour, whose main anxiety was to keep his party together, gave the proposals a lukewarm support which satisfied neither section of his followers. Chamberlain resigned from the Colonial Secretaryship in the autumn of 1903 in order to devote himself entirely to his crusade, while four other members of the Cabinet did the same because they disapproved of even the mild blessing which the Prime Minister had bestowed upon it. The most prominent of these "Unionist Free Traders" was the Duke of Devonshire, and his defection was a severe blow to the Ministry, for he carried great weight in the country as a safe, reliable, common-sense type of Englishman. And Winston Churchill, son 1874-  
of Lord Randolph, and one of the most promising of the younger generation of Unionists, actually crossed the floor of the House and joined the Liberals.

Meanwhile, Chamberlain, with the "vehement confidence" that was so characteristic of him, set a great campaign on foot. He always kept the idea of Imperial Preference to the fore, but his original programme had developed into a much wider scheme for the protection of British industries against the competition of European rivals. At the epoch when the Free Trade system had been inaugurated Britain had held a long lead over the rest of the world in industrial activity, but all that was changed, and "the Cobdenite shibboleths" were out of date. Many of the great manufacturing concerns were attracted by the idea of their industries being "protected," and they poured money into the coffers of "The Tariff Reform League," which was formed much on the model of the old Anti-Corn Law League whose work it § 77  
was designed to undo. The Liberals set up a rival organisation, "The Free Trade Union," which drew its chief support from the bankers and the shipping interests. Never was a public question more thoroughly argued out: the very professors of Political Economy were divided, and issued rival manifestoes. Much of the argument turned on the question whether the proposed changes would raise the price of food. The more responsible Tariff Reformers usually admitted that bread would cost more,



but they prophesied that (a) the increased revenue from the duties would enable them to remit the duties on tea and sugar; (b) the fillip given to industry by the power to exclude foreign manufactures, and to bargain with other countries for a lowering of their tariffs against our goods, would enable our employers to raise wages; and (c) in any case, if the working class could not afford to pay a slight tax for the cause of Imperial unity, then sixty years of Free Trade had not done much for them. But the other side of the case—the advantages that Britain had gained from her traditional fiscal policy, which had made her the entrepôt of the world's trade, the centre of the world's money market, the ocean carrier of the world's goods; the immense boon to her people of cheap and plentiful supplies of the necessities of life—all this was put with great force and persuasiveness by the re-united Liberals, Rosebery, Campbell-Bannerman, Asquith, Lloyd George, and Haldane, with the enthusiastic support of the Trade Unions and the rising Labour Party.

1906

§ 234. The Landslide.—Meanwhile the by-elections went steadily against the Government, and Chamberlain repeatedly urged Balfour to strike while the iron was still hot—or at any rate, not yet stone cold; to dissolve Parliament, that is to say, on the question of Tariff Reform. For two years Balfour contrived to evade the issue. His motive in doing so was not merely “clinging to office.” As we shall see in the next chapter, a most important change was being carried out in the foreign policy of the country, and he was anxious to see it through before taking a step which he foresaw would probably lead to a change of Government. At last, when he could hold out no longer, he resigned instead of dissolving Parliament. The object of this was to expose the weakness of the Opposition by compelling them to form their Ministry before the General Election. Strongly as had flowed the Liberal reaction during the last year or two, nobody believed that it would be possible for them to form a capable and united administration out of such very heterogeneous elements; and “C.-B.” himself was looked upon in some quarters as “the incubus,” or at best as a mere stop-gap keeping the leadership going until the brilliant Rosebery should step in again at the moment of victory. These prognostications were falsified. All sections of the party supported the man who had led them so sturdily through the wilderness into sight of the promised land. He himself forgot old grudges against those

Dec.  
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who had not always followed his lead in the days of adversity, and both "wings" of the party were adequately represented in the new Ministry.

In the General Election which followed, the Liberals had several great advantages. The cry of the "big loaf" (with appropriate diagrams on posters) proved more attractive than "Tariff Reform means work for all"; the Trade Unions were indignant at the introduction of "coolie labour" to work the mines in South Africa; the Education Bill had roused the Dissenters to fury; the disunion amongst Unionists on the question of the day did not command respect; and the natural swing of the pendulum which had been checked by the Khaki Election was now more pronounced than ever. But even after taking all these factors into consideration, the returns "staggered humanity." In a house of 680 there were only 157 Unionists; the Liberals had gained 212 seats; amongst the defeated Unionists were no fewer than seven members of the late Cabinet, including Balfour himself. This result put an end to all thought of Tariff Reform for years, and the disappointment doubtless hastened the premature close of Chamberlain's political life. In the following year he was struck down by a disabling illness, and his career, like that of so many other great statesmen, from William Pitt to President Wilson, ended amidst the shadows of an apparent failure.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. What lessons can be learnt from the South African War?
2. Trace the parallel between the Liberal split over Home Rule with the Unionist split over Tariff Reform.
3. Write speeches for each side of the Tariff controversy.
4. Give other instances of statesmen who have ended their careers by a failure.

## CHAPTER XL

### The Diplomatic Revolution

"A minister beset with the administrative work of a great office must often be astounded to read of the carefully-laid plans, the deep unrevealed motives that critics or admirers attribute to him. . . . If all secrets were known it would probably be found that British Foreign Ministers have been guided by what seemed to them to be the immediate interest of this country without making elaborate calculations for the future. . . . On the whole, the British Empire has been well served by these methods. . . . When all has been said, let critics ask what other nation in Europe can, after a review of the last hundred years, say confidently of its policy: *Si monumentum quæris, circumspice*."—LORD GREY. *Twenty-five Years*.

THE fact that Britain is an island has prevented her relationships with foreign Powers being so important to her as they must be for states with less defensible frontiers. Nevertheless, we have, in the course of our studies, noticed several characteristic strands of Foreign Policy running through the fabric of British nineteenth century history: the general support of continental "liberalism" is one, the determination to thwart Russian designs on Turkey and India is another. Towards the end of the century, however, a profound change came over this aspect of the national life—a change so complete and so fateful as fully to deserve the name given to it in the title of this chapter.

Before embarking on a brief study of this event we must premise that Foreign Affairs had long ceased to be dependent on the exigencies of party politics at Westminster. To be sure, Gladstone had come into office in 1880 with the express mission of reversing "Beaconsfieldism" abroad, but when he again became Prime Minister in 1893 he expressed his entire approval of Salisbury's Foreign Policy, and Lord Rosebery, his Foreign Secretary, made "continuity" one of his main principles. The death of Salisbury marked the end of the old era, but it was his Conservative successor (Lord Lansdowne) who brought about the Diplomatic Revolution, and a Liberal (Sir Edward Grey) who carried it on to its logical conclusion.

§ 235. Coming Events cast their Shadows before.—The most disturbing factor in European politics since the Battle of Waterloo has been the question of the Near East. The Turkish dominion over the Balkan provinces growing ever weaker through § 118 inefficiency and oppression, which of the Powers is destined to succeed to the Sultan's influence there? The Czar seemed to be the natural protector of the Balkan peoples, inasmuch as he was head of the Greek Orthodox Church to which most of them belonged; and for more than a century, the chief object of his diplomacy was to extend his influence in that direction. But the other Powers were extremely jealous of Russia's rapid growth in territory and population, and the Crimean War was fought to protect the Sultan from her aggression. Palmerston's Russophobe policy was inherited by Disraeli, and was exemplified by that intervention in the Russo-Turkish War in 1877-78, which § 191 bolstered up Turkish domination of the Balkan Christians for another generation. From the Congress of Berlin Russia turned in her chagrin to look eastwards for some other outlet for her abounding national energies and ambition, and particularly to find a port that would be ice-free all the year round—a necessity in modern days, when commerce is the life-blood of great states.

Meanwhile Austria was seeking to extend her own influence in the Balkan Peninsula. This was the "Drang nach Osten" § 166 which Bismarck had suggested as a compensation for the hegemony of Central Europe which Prussia had wrested from her in 1866. For Prussia herself, Bismarck merely sought to keep what he had gained, and particularly to guard against France ever being in a position to seek revenge for her defeat in 1870-71. He therefore made a close alliance with Austria (1879) and Italy (1883). When in addition to forming the "Triple Alliance" he succeeded in coming to a secret understanding with Russia, by which both agreed that they would not join a third party in attacking the other, he seemed once more to have placed France in a position of helpless isolation. But, to make assurance doubly sure, he contrived to embroil her with the only remaining Great Power, Britain, by encouraging her to undertake a share § 199 in the control of Egypt, and to pursue an adventurous colonial policy generally.

Then came an important landmark in the history of modern Europe—the accession in 1888 of the third of the German 1859-Emperors, William II. In him vanity was positively a disease,

and he was profoundly convinced both of the Divine Right of Kings and of his own infinite capacities as a military despot. The new captain quickly dropped the old pilot Bismarck, and set out on that venturesome voyage which was ultimately to pile his ship on the rocks. One of his favourite schemes was to become the dominant influence in Turkey, and thus to provide German capital and brains with a splendid field for enterprise, and definitely put Germany among the greatest world Powers. As a step in this direction, he encouraged his dutiful ally, Austria, in her Balkan ambitions, and paid a personal visit to the Sultan the year after his accession. This made a continuance of cordial relations with Russia almost impossible, and Bismarck's "Reinsurance Treaty" was never renewed after 1890. Russia, faced with the hostility of the Triple Alliance, naturally began to draw closer to the other State which it threatened, and the isolation of France came to an end. The closest of bonds was established  
 1893 between the two countries when French loans were floated to finance the Trans-Siberian railway; and within a few years no less than five hundred million francs of French money was spent, not only in giving unity and vitality to Greater Russia by the line from Petersburg to Vladivostock, but in the re-organisation and re-arming the Russian army.

§ 236. Egyptian Complications.—What line of policy was Great Britain to pursue, in the face of this polarisation of the European Powers into two antagonistic groups? The Russo-phobia of Palmerston and Disraeli was quite out of date, for since their time a totally new position had been created by our interference in Egyptian affairs. To join with other Powers in intervening on behalf of British financial interests there had seemed the only thing to do in the later 'seventies; but circumstances had since compelled us to undertake the whole responsibility, and the other Powers—particularly France—watched with jealous eyes the rapid development of British  
 § 189 influence. Egyptian finances were still managed by the *Caisse de la Dette*, on which representatives from Britain, France, Russia, Germany, and Austria sat; and this body had much more power to thwart the British reconstruction of Egypt than it had of pursuing any positive policy of its own. Of these five Powers, France was extremely sore at finding that she had made a mistake in resigning from the administrative "Dual Control"  
 § 191 in 1882, and Russia had never forgiven Britain for the part played

by Disraeli in 1878. And so the work of Sir Evelyn Baring, who, 1841-  
 acting as unofficial adviser to the Khedive, had undertaken the 1916  
 colossal task of putting the whole fabric of Egyptian government  
 on a sound footing, was dependent on the goodwill of the other  
 two members of the Caisse. Britain must either gain the  
 diplomatic support of Germany and Austria, or else abandon  
 the reconstruction of Egypt, and let the country slip back into  
 chaos, misgovernment, and misery, with the total loss of all the  
 European capital invested there.

Thus the Egyptian entanglement was the leading factor in  
 British Foreign Policy for something like twenty years. The  
 need for Prussian and Austrian support compelled Britain to  
 abandon her traditional maintenance of the Balance of Power.  
 Instead of preserving the peace of Europe (so essential to our  
 commercial interests) by throwing our weight on the side of the  
 weaker of two Powers, we now backed up the Triple Alliance,  
 one of the most formidable military combinations in the history  
 of Europe. Salisbury, as Foreign Secretary, beamed approval  
 of it at its inception, and later on ceded the important strategic 1890  
 island of Heligoland to Germany, with the cordial support of  
 both parties. This line of policy was particularly gratifying  
 to our Royal Family, to which the Queen's devotion to the  
 memory of the Prince Consort gave a strong pro-German bias;  
 and it might well be maintained that the overwhelming strength  
 of the "Quadruple Alliance," as the French bitterly called it,  
 did more to maintain peace than a nice adjustment of balancing  
 forces.

Baring's work was often hampered by the precarious inter-  
 national position on the *Caisse*, but he gradually overcame all  
 obstacles, and his reconstruction of Egypt will always remain  
 a wonderful example of what can be achieved by patience,  
 organising capacity, and tact. The revenue was largely increased,  
 while taxation was reduced, barbarous methods of government  
 were abolished, trade was doubled in volume, money was found  
 out of current income for vast schemes of irrigation, the  
 administration of justice purified—and all this with a minimum  
 of interference with the native officials. Side by side with this  
 reform of the civil administration a re-organisation of the army  
 was proceeding under a group of British officers, the most famous  
 of whom was Sir Herbert Kitchener, for many years Sirdar, or 1850-  
 Commander-in-Chief. At last the financial and military resources 1916

of the country were in a state to tackle the great task of winning  
 § 204 back the Soudan from the dervishes who had swept over it in  
 1883. The Sirdar set to work in the most methodical way,  
 leaving nothing to chance, and pitting all the resources of  
 civilisation against his semi-savage enemy. The greatest of all  
 difficulties in desert warfare—transport—he overcame by build-  
 ing a railway, and limiting the pace of his advance to the rate at  
 which the line could be made. After a three years' campaign  
 1898 he brought the forces of the Mahdi to bay at Omdurman, near  
 Khartoum, and wiped them out of existence. Thereafter, a  
 Condominium was established in the Soudan, the British and  
 Egyptian Governments holding a joint sway over it. Within a  
 few years Sir F. R. Wingate had effected a regeneration as  
 remarkable as that of Egypt: the slave-trade was abolished,  
 agriculture encouraged, and the Soudan became, comparatively  
 speaking, a land flowing with milk and honey.

§ 237. "Splendid Isolation."—Since Britain had no formal  
 alliance with any other Power, politicians often spoke of her  
 "splendid isolation," but evidences began to accumulate that  
 her position was not really isolated, and was very far indeed from  
 being splendid. The Egyptian entanglement compelled us to  
 submit to very rough treatment from the young Kaiser: in 1893,  
 when we were brusquely ordered to desist from competing with  
 § 225 Germany for a railway concession in Egypt; and again in 1896,  
 when he sent an insulting telegram of congratulation to President  
 Kruger over the Jameson Raid. In that same year we also found  
 ourselves on the brink of a war with the United States.

For many years there had been some doubt as to the precise  
 boundary between British Guiana and the Republic of Venezuela.  
 In 1895 the dispute was suddenly brought to an acute stage when  
 the Venezuelans arrested two officers of the British Guiana police  
 for trespassing on Venezuelan territories. The officers were  
 subsequently released, but President Cleveland intervened, and  
 announced that he would appoint a tribunal to settle the matter.  
 Salisbury declined this forced arbitration; whereupon Cleveland  
 sent a message to Congress to the effect that any attempt on the  
 part of Great Britain to enforce her claims in Venezuela was  
 contrary to the spirit of the Monroe Doctrine, and would be  
 regarded as a *casus belli*. The British Government and people  
 were amazed at this attitude; but the United States were quickly  
 aflame with military ardour, and in the face of Britain's "splendid

isolation" in Europe. Salisbury could not but submit to the President's imperious demand. The Court decided in favour of the British claims, and the tension between the two nations was soon relaxed; but the episode was an unpleasant reminder of the dangers of isolation. 1897

Another such reminder followed a year or two later, when the undercurrent of ill-will between Britain and France suddenly came to a head. The imperialistic spirit of the epoch had led the French to build up a vast colonial dominion in tropical Africa, and they now conceived the idea of extending this right through the Soudan to the Red Sea. Kitchener's conquest of the Soudan was proceeding apace, when the French Government sent a Major Marchand to forestall the British by setting up the Tricolor at Fashoda. Within a week or two, the Sirdar, having just completed his military task, hastened to the spot and politely but firmly desired Marchand to haul down his flag and withdraw, on the ground that the Power that governed Egypt could not possibly allow any other Power to control the upper waters of the river upon which Egyptian prosperity depends. For some weeks the issue of peace and war trembled in the balance, and Chamberlain adjured our neighbours to mend their manners. The French Government eventually gave way, but there were not lacking people in Britain who expressed the view that a war with France was "inevitable," and that the sooner we got it over the better. Responsible statesmen took a more serious view of the position, however, and the fear lest England should have to stand alone against the combination of France and Russia caused Chamberlain to make overtures both to Germany and to the United States for some sort of defensive alliance—overtures which met with a more or less polite refusal. Then came the South African War; and the unanimity with which the rest of the world sympathised with the Boers, exulted in their early successes, and gleefully anticipated the disruption of the British Empire, was a disagreeable surprise. We expected something of the sort from France, but from our Teutonic "blood relatives," it came as a cruel shock—especially when the Kaiser gave a broad hint that it was only the weakness of his navy that prevented him from taking advantage of Britain's difficulties, and proceeded to repair that weakness as fast as shipwrights could build. 1898

§ 238. The Anglo-Japanese Alliance.—To remain isolated in these circumstances would have been suicidal; and since the



white races declined to form an alliance with Britain, we turned to the yellow. The development of Japan from semi-barbarous feudalism to the position of a fully developed modern industrial State within the space of thirty years is one of the marvels of modern history ; but it does not concern us here until it brought her into immediate contact with Britain. The new Japanese civilisation, being an imitation of that of the United States and of Western Europe, is based on Industrialism. Mass production requires extended markets, and the most obvious markets for Japanese goods were to be found on the mainland opposite, and especially in Korea, over which the Mikado had some ancient claims to suzerainty. This was the origin of the war between China and Japan in 1894. Having been completely successful in that war, Japan was robbed of the fruits of her victory by the intervention of Russia, France, and Germany. The great Chinese statesman, Li Hung Chang, had agreed to cede to Japan the Liao-Tung Peninsula with the valuable harbour of Port Arthur ; but the Powers ordered the Treaty to be cancelled on the grounds that, since Port Arthur dominated Peking, it was incompatible with the integrity of China that it should be in the hands of an alien State. As a matter of fact, this jealousy for the integrity of China was not disinterested : it was the outcome of their own designs on that Empire. Africa having been partitioned into colonies and "spheres of influence," the most eligible field for commercial exploitation was now China. To Russia, especially, it seemed the most obvious outlet for her impulse towards aggrandisement, which had been so signally thwarted in both the Near and Middle East. With an Oriental acceptance of the inevitable Japan gave way, accepted at the suggestion of the Czar an enormous war indemnity in lieu of the coveted peninsula—and forthwith doubled her army and trebled her navy. The hypocrisy of the Russian Government was made manifest a year or so later, when it used the economic hold it had gained over China by the loan of money to pay the indemnity to Japan, in order to extort a "lease" of that very Liao-Tung peninsula which it had just declared to be essential to the integrity of China, and at the same time gained the right to run the Trans-Siberian railway down to Port Arthur (the ice-free port at last !), and to flood Manchuria with troops on the pretext of protecting the railway. Germany followed the Russian example, by bullying the Emperor of China into granting a similar lease of Kiao-Chow,

as "compensation" for the murder of two German missionaries. France, too, found an excuse to extort further concession in Cochin China. Britain had refused to join with the other Powers in coercing Japan in 1894, and had declared that she could not regard China with its teeming millions and its ancient civilisation as a fair field for economic exploitation as savage and half-empty Africa had been, but she was now compelled to take over the port of Wei-hai-wei as a naval base from which she could keep an eye 1897 on her energetic European rivals.

Then followed the "Boxer rising" of 1901, a desperate effort on the part of the conservative elements in China to rid their country of the "foreign devils" and all their works and ways. Japan acted in concert with the European Powers in putting the movement down: her statesmen acted with scrupulous "correctness," and her soldiers gained great credit, not only by their discipline and efficiency, but even more by the restraint and humanity of their conduct, compared with the license and brutality of the German, French, and Russian troops. It was perhaps significant that the only force to share these honours with the Japanese was also Asiatic—the Indian contingent which represented Britain.

The next year it was announced that Britain had made a formal Treaty of Alliance with Japan, by which if either party 1902 was attacked by more than one enemy, the other undertook to come to its support. Thus re-assured, Japan took the bold step of challenging the growing domination of Russia in the Far East. The overwhelming Japanese victory in the war which followed (1905) may turn out to be the most important event recorded in this book. It undermined the autocratic system of government in Russia by exposing the incompetence and corruption on which it was based, it decided once for all that China was not to be "partitioned" amongst the Western Powers, it made good the claims of the Japanese to be considered one of the leading nations in the world, and, above all, it aroused the self-confidence of the people of Asia, and made them feel that the era of their subordination to the white races was drawing to an end.

§ 239. "The Entente Cordiale."—The alliance with Japan was the first definite breach in the policy of isolation, but it had little direct influence on the situation in Europe, which was becoming highly critical through the development of German policy by William II. Bismarck had spoken of Germany as "satiated" by her conquests, and as desiring merely to preserve

1890 the *status quo*, but the rapid growth of industrialism in the country had made it necessary to find new fields for economic exploitation. The development of overseas trade involved the development of a powerful navy to protect it. Nowhere had Captain Mahan's books on the "Influence of Sea Power on History" been more eagerly read, or their lessons more earnestly taken to heart. Certainly it was only with great difficulty that the Prussian Legislature was induced to provide the enormous naval expenditure demanded by the Kaiser in 1898, but a Navy League was formed to "educate" the people, and the shipbuilding "programme" was doubled two years later. These facts, and the Kaiser's own bellicose remarks about Germany's future being on the water, and her bitter need for a strong navy, and so on, gave British statesmen a good deal to think about. Germany was profoundly dissatisfied with her share of Africa, the Monroe Doctrine shut her out of South America (whither many Germans had emigrated), the Anglo-Japanese Alliance would henceforth severely restrict her activities in the Far East. Had she now fallen back on a policy of aggrandisement at the expense of the British Empire? Her one successful piece of commercial expansion had been in the Near East, where she had gained a paramount influence at Constantinople, and a concession to build a railway that would connect Berlin with Bagdad. Was not this last enterprise almost admittedly aimed to further some future aggression in Egypt and India?

Clearly it would have been courting disaster to drift into a war with the Triple Alliance, and at the same time be on bad terms with France. Germany had been exploiting Britain's isolation for more than twenty years. If Britain and France could act together, there would be more hope for world peace than if Germany felt that she could play each off against the other, and attack each in her own time. It was with this object that Lord Lansdowne and Delcassé, the two Foreign Ministers, framed the general agreement which became so popular by means of the catch-phrase "*the entente cordiale*." That phrase expresses its limitations. It was not a formal alliance, for neither party gave any explicit pledge to support the other in war; but all the outstanding causes of squabbling were settled. For instance, France undertook to support England's work in Egypt in return for a similar support in Morocco, and both parties agreed to submit all subsequent difficulties to a specified Court of Arbitra-

tion. This arrangement, and the general good feeling between Englishmen and Frenchmen which accompanied it, received a considerable stimulus from the personality of Edward VII. 1841-1910 He had none of the pro-German prejudices of his mother. There had never been any love lost between him and his nephew the Kaiser, and his genial pleasure-loving nature made him very sympathetic to the French nation. He never stepped outside his appointed path as a constitutional sovereign, but his private opinions were in close accord with this new departure in British Foreign Policy, and his personal support was a very valuable factor in making it a real thing.

The Arbitration Agreement was largely the outcome of the Peace Conference which had been held at the suggestion of the Czar at the Hague in 1899. The ostensible object of this was to find some means of bringing to an end the frenzied and futile competition amongst the European States to outdo each other in armaments—a competition which was imposing crushing burdens on the nations, and making the devastation of a general war almost inevitable. Twenty-six Powers had been represented at The Hague, but international hatreds, fears, and jealousies had proved stronger than either Christian doctrines or common sense. The only practical result was a general provision for a permanent panel from which Courts of Arbitration might be chosen.

Thus we have traced four striking phenomena in this chapter: firstly, the sudden rise of an Asiatic race to the position of a Great Power; secondly, the resurrection of France from the pitiful position to which Bismarck had reduced her—a resurrection brought about partly by the skill with which her statesmen played the old game of international politics, but partly also by the blundering megalomania of William II; thirdly, the forming by Britain of a close friendship with her traditional enemy across the Channel, as a precaution against the designs of her traditional friends across the Rhine; and fourthly, the substitution of economic for political or territorial ambitions as the mainspring of the policy of the Powers.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Trace the World War to economic causes.
2. Support the thesis that the Russo-Japanese War was the most important event in modern history.
3. What were the immediate causes of the Entente?
4. Give the arguments for and against British control in Egypt.

## CHAPTER XLI

### The Third Great Era of Reform

"Every day the area for initiative is being narrowed, every day the standing ground for self-reliance is being undermined; every day the public infringes—with the best intentions no doubt—on the individual; the nation is being taken into custody by the State."—LORD ROSEBERY.

"No more striking testimony can be given of the momentum of the new ideas which the fall of the Bastille effectually spread over the world than the triumph of democracy in England within little more than a century, over the political mediævalism of ten centuries' growth. . . . Samson is feeling his grip on the pillars."—SIDNEY WEBB.

IN the course of this history we have seen two periods of sweeping legislative changes. The first was during the 'thirties, the second was the Gladstone Administration of 1868-74. We have now to give some account of a third—the eight years of Liberal Government that immediately preceded the World War. Unlike the two former eras, this was not inaugurated by a great extension of the franchise, but like them it was a reaction from a long spell of comparative quiescence in legislation. The only important Act bearing directly on the welfare of the people that had been passed during the ten years of Unionist rule had been the Workmen's Compensation Act of 1897; but the floodgates of social reform were now drawn, and a perfect spate of such measures flowed for some years—and before the tidal wave was exhausted it had overwhelmed the constitutional position of the House of Lords.

§ 240. The Genesis of the "Labour Party."—One of the most striking features of the 1906 General Election had been the emergence of a Fourth Party of Labour members. To grasp the significance of this we must retrace our steps somewhat. Away back in 1847 Karl Marx, a German revolutionary in exile in London, had issued his "Communist Manifesto," which expounded, for the first time in this country, the gospel of  
§ 70 "scientific" Socialism, as distinct from the sentimental Utopianism of Robert Owen. His view was that the working

of the economic laws which had brought "Capitalism" into being (as the outcome of the Industrial Revolution) would soon destroy that iniquitous system of production and distribution: it therefore behoved "the proletariat" to be ready, when the collapse came, to take charge of the situation and direct the new order of society, in which wealth would be produced by co-operative activity for common consumption. Twenty years later Marx brought out *Das Kapital*, a very long and abstruse 1867 exposition of the economic basis of these doctrines. But the British working man was not attracted by theories, and the old Trade Unions never adopted Socialism in any shape or form.

Very little, indeed, was heard of Marx in this country until 1884, when H. M. Hyndman, a well-to-do member of the middle class, founded the Social Democratic Federation to expound and advocate his teachings. At about the same time was founded the Fabian Society, of which George Bernard Shaw was the leading spirit and Sidney Webb the master mind. Like the S.D.F., the Fabian Society sought to educate the public mind to "emancipate land and capital from individual and class ownership, and vest them in the community for the general benefit," but it looked to no sudden revolution to bring this about. It sought to change the basis of society by what opponents ridiculed as "the inevitability of gradualness," by permeating the minds of public men who would never label themselves as "Socialists," by promoting Collectivism through legislation in Parliament (such as Factory Acts, Adulteration Acts and Land Acts), and through administration in town and county councils (the running of municipal trams, gasworks, wash-houses and so on).

The sporadic efforts of these societies and of many local Socialist organisations up and down the country had made little impression on Parliamentary constituencies; and in 1893 they joined forces, after a conference at Bradford, to form the Independent Labour Party, with Keir Hardie as chairman.

But even this made no real mark until it became identified with the Trade Unions seven years later. The leaders of the unions of unskilled labourers which had been established after the dock strike in 1888 had felt that the "Friendly Society" § 219 methods of the older Unions (which were confined to skilled and comparatively well-paid artisans) would not suffice for these organisations of workers living on the border line of starvation. Parliamentary action would be required to improve their condition

—that is to say, State Socialism must be aimed at, and the votes of the workers canalised to procure the election of members favourable thereto. Moreover, a younger and more politically-ambitious generation of leaders was coming to the front even in the older Unions. Thus, throughout the 'nineties the leading spirits in the Trade Union movement were becoming more and more favourable to the socialistic "I.L.P.," which always supported them in strikes and lock-outs. In 1899 this union of hearts was consummated: the Trade Union Congress of that year included many Socialists (it is generally the most "advanced" men that are chosen as delegates and officials, since they are commonly the most energetic members of the Unions), and it decided to associate itself with the I.L.P. in forming a "Labour Representation Committee." By 1905 this organisation had got five of its members elected to Parliament. The Education Bill of 1902 (so offensive to the Nonconformist element which was the backbone of the older unions), the importation of coolie labour into South Africa, and the Taff Vale decision (which seemed to strike at the very roots of Trade Unionism) all tended to promote the solidarity of the working classes. Thus, in the 1906 Election the "Labour Party," as it was now renamed, was able to get thirty of its fifty-one candidates elected, and become a force to be reckoned with in the House. It was primarily representative of the Trade Unions, which subscribed (and many of them could afford to do so handsomely) to a fund for paying election expenses and salaries of the candidates, who were all poor men—usually themselves Trade Union officials. Most of the members of the Labour Party were "Socialists," but this is a very vague term, and the general trend of their influence was rather towards social reform than towards any overthrow of the existing capitalistic fabric of society. Campbell-Bannerman seemed to recognise this when he entered into an informal alliance with them before the election by arranging that their candidates should not be opposed by Liberals, and by giving one of their number, John Burns, a seat in the Cabinet as Chairman of the Local Government Board.

§ 241. Labour Leavens the Liberal Lump. — Until the election of 1910 had reduced its numbers the new Government was in no way dependent on its new allies, and it had itself come into office with a strong mandate for social reform; but we can trace the influence of the Fourth Party in at least half a dozen

pieces of legislation during the eight years of Liberal rule that preceded the Great War.

For instance, one of the very first actions of the Liberals was to pass an Act to protect the Trade Unions. It had always § 18a been supposed that the Acts of 1871 and 1875 shielded the Unions from financial responsibility for the effects of a stoppage of work, but after the strike on the Taff Vale Railway in 1901 the masters had successfully prosecuted the Union concerned, and it appeared that the wording of the Acts referred to had hitherto been misunderstood. This doubt was now cleared up by the Trade Disputes Act of 1906, which expressly laid it down that Trade Unions could not be prosecuted for "conspiracy," and that their funds were not liable for actions for damages when firms lost money by strikes.

Next came the establishment of Old Age Pensions, as a sort of appendix to the Budget of 1908. A pension of 5s. a week was to be paid after the age of seventy to all people without other means of support. The proposal had always been associated with Chamberlain, ever since the days of his unregenerate Radicalism in the 'eighties, but it had never been put into practical shape. The scheme that now came into force was "non-contributory"—that is to say, no part of the benefit was met by the savings of the individual during his working years. The cost to the country was to be about six millions a year, but it was pointed out that the result would be a considerable saving to the rates, for many old people would be saved from having to go to the workhouse.

One of the greatest causes of unemployment, and of the unrest arising therefrom, had always been the immobility of labour. When a man lost his job it was very difficult for him to find work in his own district, let alone in any other. An attempt to meet this trouble was made by the Labour Exchanges instituted by Winston Churchill (who was then Home Secretary) in 1909. The country was divided into ten districts, each with a clearing-house for labour, co-ordinated with a central clearing-house in London. Over a hundred "Exchanges" were opened in the larger towns, at which unemployed persons and employers looking for workmen could register their wants and be brought into touch with each other.

The fourth item on the list was the passing of the Insurance Act in 1911 by Lloyd George, the Chancellor of the Exchequer. This was a contributory scheme for the compulsory insurance



of the working classes against sickness and unemployment. Out of every ninepence paid into the Benefit Fund, the insured person provided fourpence, and the other fivepence was paid by the employer and the State. There was a great outcry against the measure as robbery of the poor, as a cruel indignity to the doctors called upon to treat patients for a fixed sum per head per annum, and as a ridiculous example of "grandmotherly legislation"; but there is no doubt that it did much to allay destitution and discontent in the dark days to come, and many a struggling medical man was put on his feet by becoming "a panel doctor."

§ 72 The fifth piece of State Socialism was the Payment of Members, which came into force the same year. This had in the old days been one of the six points of the "People's Charter," and it had been adopted by most of the world's legislatures (including those of the dominions); but Englishmen had always taken a pride in the system by which the work of government, both parliamentary and local, was carried on gratuitously. This, however, confined such functions to the well-to-do, and was out of keeping with the democratic spirit of the age. In future, each member was to draw £400 a year from the national exchequer.

Sixthly, we must notice the intervention of the Government in the national coal strike of 1912—the first instance of the sort in our history. Members of the Cabinet had conferences with both masters and men, but failed to bring about an agreement. A Bill was therefore passed which affirmed the principle of a minimum wage below which a man's earnings could not fall, even when he came to an "abnormal place" from which he could not get the usual amount of coal; but providing that this minimum should be fixed locally, by District Boards, on which both masters and men should be represented. The miners' leaders had wanted a "national minimum," but they nevertheless accepted the settlement, and sent their men back to work.

Lastly, under what was known as the "Osborne Judgment," it appeared that the law as it stood did not permit of a Trade Union using any part of its funds for the payment of such items as election expenses. This disability was removed by a special Act of Parliament—the Trade Union Bill of 1913—which restored to the Unions power to apply their funds in whatever way they chose, but allowed any member to decline to support "the political levy" without thereby forfeiting his membership of the union.

§ 242. "The Suffragettes."—A characteristic feature of

these eight years of Liberal rule before the Great War was the "militant" Woman Suffrage movement. It made its first demonstration by interrupting Campbell-Bannerman's meeting in the Albert Hall on the eve of the 1906 Election, and nothing more was heard of it after August 4th, 1914.

There had been several societies advocating "Votes for Women," but they had pursued their object by sober constitutional methods, and nobody had taken much notice of them. Then, in 1905 Mrs. Pankhurst and her two daughters founded "The Women's Social and Political Union," which set out to advertise the movement by violent "direct action." Somewhat in the spirit of the Irish Party in Parliament during the early 'eighties, they determined that the Government should not know a moment's peace until it had granted their demands. The election of 1906 had certainly given no "mandate" for the change, and the Cabinet was very divided in its views of the matter, but these considerations were brushed aside as idle sophistry. The ladies stopped at nothing to call attention to the crying injustice suffered by their sex, taxed without representation, and subjected to all sorts of unfair treatment by "man-made law." Their contempt for this "man-made law" they displayed in a great variety of ways: they smashed shop-windows with hammers, they destroyed the mail by throwing inflammable material into letter-boxes, they interrupted political meetings, they invited the public to help them rush the lobbies of the House of Commons. As for the luckless Ministers, the fair agitators threatened them with dog-whips and red pepper, tried to kidnap their children, and even ventured to intrude upon them in the act of playing golf. They were just as hostile to "half-hearted friends" such as Lloyd George as they were against avowed opponents like Asquith.

All this may seem curiously irrelevant as support for a claim to the rights of citizenship, but there is no doubt that it did cause John Bull to "sit up and take notice" of the subject. There was plenty of financial support for "the cause," and many women made great sacrifices of their personal convenience for it. They were arrested in hundreds after some of their exploits, and they usually refused to pay fines, so as to be sent to prison. There many of them declined to take food, and thus placed the authorities in a predicament. The martyrs could not be allowed to die of starvation; the only alternatives were to feed

force or to let them out. There was such an outcry against the former method that McKenna (who was Home Secretary during the latter part of the period) put through what was known as "The Cat and Mouse Act," which enabled him to re-arrest without warrant prisoners released when "hunger-striking." This measure also was very unpopular, and the Government was greatly embarrassed by the movement. But they refused to give way before it, and women only gained the franchise in the Parliament Act of 1918, when the justice of their claim had been brought home to people by their devotion to the national cause during the war.

§ 243. "The People's Budget."—Early in 1908 Campbell-Bannerman's health broke up; he retired from office and died a few months later. He was succeeded by H. H. Asquith, and amongst the changes consequent upon this was the appointment of Lloyd George to be Chancellor of the Exchequer. Lloyd George had always been the most advanced of Radicals, and he took over this all-important office with the intention of bringing in a drastic and sweeping Budget, that should not only provide the large additional revenue required for costly social reforms such as Old Age Pensions, but should be in itself a measure of social reform by taking toll of the rich for the benefit of the poor. He christened it the "People's Budget," and when he introduced it in the House in April, 1909, he explained its sensational features by declaring that it was not an ordinary peace Budget, but a war Budget—"to raise money to wage implacable war against poverty and squalor." Its chief features were: (a) an addition to the Income Tax of a "Super-Tax" of 6*d.* in the £ on incomes over £3,000; (b) a considerable increase in the Spirits and Tobacco Duties; and (c) a new set of Land Taxes, which involved a general re-valuation of the land. Of these last the most important was a tax on "unearned increments"—that is to say, where a piece of land had increased in value not through the enterprise of the owner, but owing to the growth of towns and so on, a certain proportion of the increase was to be paid over to the State.

The excitement was tremendous. The Radicals and "Labourites" were delighted, but the wealthier classes were aghast at the prospect. The more ardent Tariff Reformers felt that if the Budget were not defeated they would be deprived of their argument that only by Protection could the country raise

the increased revenue required for the modern scale of State expenditure; and the Irish Party were particularly aggrieved at the increased Whisky Duty. A "Budget League" was countered by a "Budget Protest League," and the country was once more overwhelmed with propaganda as it had been a few years before over the Tariff Reform agitation. Even in the House of Commons, so stiff was the battle that, despite the Government's huge majority, the Budget—which is usually got through in the course of a few days in April—was not passed until November.

Then began a new "sensation." The question arose: what will the House of Lords do about it? According to the established principles of the constitution it could not interfere with a Money Bill, but some vigorous members of the Opposition declared that this was an exceptional case, "the beginning of the end of all rights of property." Lord Lansdowne likened Lloyd George to "a swooping robber gull, particularly voracious and unscrupulous," and Lord Rosebery described the Budget as "Socialism, the end of all—the negation of Faith, of Family, of Property, of Monarchy, of Empire." The Chancellor of the Exchequer was well able to take his own part, however, and after his attack on the Peers in a speech delivered in the East End of London, virulent abuse by politicians of their opponents was long known as "Limehouse." When it came to actually throwing the Budget out, many of the Peers were apprehensive as to the ultimate consequences of such an unprecedented proceeding; but Lord Milner adjured them to do what they thought right and "damn the consequences."

They did. For the first time for centuries a Budget was thrown out by the House of Lords. Asquith immediately dissolved Parliament, to give the country a chance to speak its mind. At the General Election of January, 1910, the Liberal Majority was reduced to about 120, but this was sufficient for the purpose; and when the obnoxious Budget was again presented to them in April (by which time another Budget was due!) they allowed it to pass.

§ 244. "The ——— Consequences."—But the Government was not disposed to let the matter rest there. The temerity of the Peers in throwing out the Budget had brought to a head a long-standing quarrel between them and the Liberal Party. There was a permanent and overwhelming majority of Conservatives

in the House of Lords, and the Liberals complained that this was used unfairly to destroy measures of reform whenever they were in office. Balfour himself, in commenting on the result of the Election of 1906, had declared that "the great Unionist Party would still, whether in power or in Opposition, control the destinies of this great Empire." This, coming at a moment when the electors of Britain had just put the Unionists in a minority of over 500 in a House of 670 seemed to be contrary to the very principles of constitutional government. And the Peers did not fail to act upon his suggestion. In the first year of the new  
1908 administration they had mangled the Education Bill (by which an attempt had been made to amend Balfour's Bill of 1902) so severely that the Government dropped it altogether; and several other important measures, passed by overwhelming majorities in a newly-elected House of Commons, after long consideration and discussion, were summarily vetoed by a sparsely-attended House of Peers, without any discussion at all. In 1911, again, they had given the Licensing Bill (which aimed at reducing the number of public-houses to a fixed proportion to the population) what a humourist amongst them described as "a first-class funeral" by calling up all the hundreds of "backwoodsmen"—peers who did not trouble to attend to their legislative functions except on important occasions—to come and vote it down.

After the rejection of the Budget some of the Peers attempted to flee from the wrath to come by a plan to reconstitute the Second Chamber by eliminating the "backwoodsmen," but the latter declined to commit political suicide, and the scheme had to be dropped. Meanwhile the Government decided that the most satisfactory solution of the problem would be to limit the  
May 1910 power of the House of Lords to a suspensive veto. The battle was just about to begin when King Edward suddenly died, whereupon the serried ranks piled arms and came to a parley. A conference between the leaders of both sides was carried on for some months, but it broke down, *re infecta*, in November. The Government decided to dissolve and "go to the country" on the sole question whether the absolute veto of the House of Lords be abolished. The result of the election (January, 1911) was a return of the Liberals with their majority practically unchanged. Thereupon the "Parliament Bill" was brought in, and carried through the Commons in May. The Lords passed mutilating amendments to it, substituting a Referendum for the

**Suspensory Veto.** The House of Commons rejected these amendments, and sent the Bill up again in its original form. The question now was whether the Peers would insist on their amendments. The Government announced that King George V, taking into consideration the result of the recent election, had agreed to take the last constitutional step to make the will of the people prevail—the creation of Liberal Peers in sufficient numbers to prevent the rejection of the Bill. Thus the only alternative to the Peers passing the Bill themselves was to have their dignity compromised by the creation of some 450 new Peers—and to see the Bill passed after all. The Unionist leaders, Balfour and Lansdowne, advised their followers to give way; but a minority, led by the aged Lord Halsbury and supported from his retirement by Chamberlain, determined to “die in the last ditch” before they would give way. No considerable number of the Peers followed this lead, however, and the motion to insist on the amendments was lost by 131 votes to 114, the majority including 37 Unionists.

The Act provided that if the Commons passed a Bill in three successive sessions it became law without going to the Lords at all, that the Lords had no control whatever over Finance Bills, and that the duration of Parliament should henceforward be five years instead of seven.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Illustrate from the last two sections the dangers of rigid adherence to political principles.
2. A history of the Trade Union Movement up to 1914.
3. A history of political “agitations” in the nineteenth century.
4. Trace the development of “State Socialism” in Britain.

## CHAPTER XLII

### The British Commonwealth of Nations

"The Empire is the greatest and most fruitful experiment that the world has yet seen in the corporate union of free and self-governing communities."  
—ASQUITH.

NONE of the phenomena of the nineteenth century (which from the historical point of view really began with the Battle of Waterloo and ended with the World War) was of greater importance than the development of a new species of world-state. The British Commonwealth does not resemble any other Empire in the history of the world, for it includes a number of self governing democratic nation-states, held together by race, speech, traditions and sentiment, with only the most shadowy of political ties, the chief bonds being a loose easy-fitting organisation for defence, and a common foreign policy. In this chapter we shall see how this notion of the basis of the Empire took shape, how disparate settlements were consolidated into Dominions, and how India and Ireland demanded a similar independent status in the Commonwealth.

§ 245. The Eldest of the Daughter-Nations : Canada.—  
The constitutional ideas from which the British Commonwealth of Nations developed were first set forth in the famous Durham Report, and it was in Canada that they were first put into practice. "Responsible Government" was set up there in the 'forties, but for many years it seemed as if economic and geographical factors would lead sooner or later to the provinces joining the United States. That this was avoided was mainly due to Sir John Macdonald. He determined to make the Canadians an independent nation in partnership with, but independent of, the Mother Country ; and he had a statesmanlike grasp of the means by which this was to be brought about.

§ 92

1815—  
1891

The first necessity was to counteract the attractive force exercised by their great and powerful neighbour on the struggling colonies, by uniting them under a federal government. The 1867 British North America Act brought a new nation into existence. The constitution it set up was more centripetal than that of the United States, for it gave the Federal Government at Ottawa control over all matters except such purely local affairs as were reserved for the Provincial Councils. The original members of the federation were Quebec, Ontario, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, and Nova Scotia, to which were added Manitoba in 1870, British Columbia in 1871, Saskatchewan and Alberta in 1905. Newfoundland has never consented to sink her identity so far as to join them.

The second of Macdonald's methods for preserving unity was 1881- the building of the Canadian Pacific Railway in the early 'eighties. 1885 Hitherto the chief commercial arteries had run north and south : now the far-flung string of provinces were linked together, and they began to look for economic support to each other rather than to the United States. A further result was the development of the great wheat countries between the Lakes and the Rockies, so that two new provinces were developed, and the Atlantic and Pacific coasts brought into touch with each other.

Unification was further cemented by the adoption in 1878 of high import duties to keep out American manufactures and make Canada self-supporting. The long tenure of office by the Conservatives in the Dominion Parliament (1878-91) was mainly due to the fact that the party was identified with the policy of the Tariff, while the Liberals were in favour of an economic alliance with the United States by means of a "reciprocity agreement." The Liberals got into power in 1896 under Sir Wilfrid Laurier by dropping reciprocity, but as soon as they took it up again in 1910 they were again defeated, and the Conservatives reinstated under Sir William Borden.

§ 246. "Le Socialisme sans Doctrines" : New Zealand.—The next dominion to develop a real sense of nationality was New Zealand. Here the compelling factor was not the proximity of a powerful neighbour, but the very opposite of this—the isolation of the country. It had become virtually independent of the Mother Country in 1853, and had then set up half a dozen § 88 provincial assemblies with a rather shadowy Federal Government at Auckland. So long as they were thinly populated the provinces



were almost isolated, but during the next twenty years the population increased six-fold, and this subdivision of a country hardly larger than Great Britain became a hindrance to economic development. In 1876, therefore, the provincial assemblies were abolished altogether (which was going a step further than Canada had gone nine years before), and New Zealand became a unitary State with Wellington as the seat of government.

1845-  
1906

For some years the new Dominion continued to prosper. The Government rapidly extended the railway system, and the consequent demand for labour further stimulated immigration. In the late 'eighties, however, this over-development led to bad times, and to a decided check in prosperity. Then, in 1893, the premiership of Richard Seddon, commonly called "King Dick," marked the beginning of a new era, not only in the history of New Zealand, but in the arts of government generally. Seddon was a bluff, hearty, rugged pioneer. He had no book-culture, he knew little of economic or political science, and he cared nothing for "Socialistic" theories; but he carried out what an observant French visitor called "*Le Socialisme sans Doctrines*"—a series of experiments in collectivism far bolder than would have been possible in older countries with powerful vested interests and deeply-rooted traditions. He put on a progressive land-tax which penalised great landowners and tended to the breaking-up of great estates into small holdings; he minimised the danger of strikes by means of Conciliation Boards and a National Arbitration Court whose awards have the whole weight of the law behind them; he instituted an income-tax and death duties so steeply graduated that really wealthy men paid as much as 7s. 6d. in the £, at a time when the largest incomes in Britain paid only 10d.; and he established Old Age Pensions, Compulsory State Insurance, and Votes for Women long before the Mother Country thought of such things. The national spirit was fostered by Acts restricting immigration, and by the erection of tariff walls as high as those of Canada.

§ 247. "Where Labour Rules": Australia.—Like New Zealand, Australia consisted of a number of isolated settlements, but it is so much greater in area that it was not till much later that the impulse towards union was strongly felt. Federation was not even suggested until 1890, and the idea required ten years more of incubation before the Commonwealth came into existence. One of the great obstacles was that whereas the general opinion

was in favour of Protection, New South Wales clung to the Free Trade policy upon which the importance of Sydney was based (Sydney being the only "free port" in Australia). The great stimulus to union, on the other hand, was the need for collective action against the wholesale immigration of Asiatics; to which was added later on the possibility of aggressive policy by Japan and Germany in the Pacific. The form of constitution finally adopted by the constituent committee has been described as "all sail and no ballast." It is distinctly more democratic than even that of the United States. For instance, the Senate has no executive functions, and no veto over the laws passed by the Lower House.

But the most interesting feature of Australian politics is that it is the first country in history in which the labouring masses have gained control of the legal government. What makes this the more remarkable is that the Labour Party and the Labour Ministry are themselves controlled by a body outside Parliament, the highly organised party machine or "caucus," representative of the Trade Unions, which selects candidates, collects funds, and adopts policies. The development of this party is a significant phenomenon. A series of disastrous strikes in the late 'eighties—culminating in something like a universal stoppage of work in 1890—seemed to be disintegrating society and cutting at the very roots of prosperity by frightening away foreign capital. The Trade Unions thereupon resolved to turn to politics as an alternative to the "direct method": they would get control of the State themselves. Thus the very origin and purpose of the Labour Party was to manipulate legislation in favour of the working classes, and it is not surprising that Australia has pushed the control of the State over wages and conditions of labour further than any other country in the world. There are Wages Boards and Courts of Industrial Appeal, both in the separate States and under the Commonwealth Government; everything has been done to enhance the power and prestige of the Trade Unions and to give them almost despotic control over both master and man; drastic land laws have broken up the great estates and have made Australia one of the great corn countries of the world. And the laws which have made a "White Australia" came from the same principle—the determination to make the country a good place for the average man, by limiting the supply of labour and so raising the standard of comfort and wages. Another

very interesting experiment has been what is called "The New Protection"—that is to say, giving protection to manufacturers only so long as they pass on some of the advantages by paying good wages and by keeping prices reasonably low for the consumer.

§ 222 § 234 1906 **§ 248. The Youngest of the Daughter-Nations : South Africa.**—Each of the other dominions has been happy in having an uneventful history, but the development of South Africa was long retarded by a racial problem far more acute than that of Canada, complicated by a "colour" difficulty which has had no counterpart elsewhere in the Empire. When Cecil Rhodes died in 1902 it seemed as if his conception of a South African nation formed by a fusion of Dutch and British, independent and self-governing, was still far from realisation ; but this was the dark hour before the dawn. Immediately after the end of the Boer War, Lord Milner, the High Commissioner, set to work to put the recently annexed States on the road to prosperity once more, with money provided by the British taxpayer—surely the first time in history that a war indemnity was paid by the victors ! Unfortunately one of the methods adopted was the reopening of the Rand mines with the labour of imported Chinese coolies. Australians and New Zealanders, with their rigid ideas of the "colour-bar," were as indignant as the working class in South Africa itself that their assistance in the war should have led to this introduction of "cheap labour," and the Liberal Party in England made full use of "Chinese slavery" as an election cry in 1906. As soon as he had got into office, Campbell-Bannerman bore witness to the Liberal faith in self-government by at once giving the two ex-republics complete autonomy. This had been promised by his predecessors, but many people thought that the time was not yet ripe for it, and those who had been eager to make the Transvaal British were disgusted that the fruits of victory should be given away so readily—for the first elected assemblies gave a majority to the Dutch.

But within a year it became apparent that "C.B.'s" bold and generous gesture of confidence would be fully justified. Delegates of both races, representing the four colonies (Cape Colony, Natal, the Transvaal, and the Orange River Colony), met in congress at Durban to form a union. The result was a great step towards building up the South African nation of Rhodes' dreams, for the scheme adopted went far beyond such a federation as the Australian Commonwealth to a strongly unified constitution

like that of New Zealand. The colonies were to be re-named "provinces," and their separate councils were to become entirely subordinate to the Parliament at Cape Town. The constitution was ratified by the Parliaments of the several colonies in 1909, and by the Imperial Parliament a year later. Thus was born a new member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, with a Prime Minister (Louis Botha) who a few years before had commanded the Boers against the Britons, but who was destined a 1916 few years later to have a signal opportunity of proving the strength of the ties which now bound Briton and Boer together.

§ 249. The Growth of the Commonwealth Idea.—We have seen how these new nations were formed; we must now notice the growing tendency for them to form a voluntary association amongst themselves for certain purposes, under the leadership of the Imperial Government in London. At the outset we shall observe a circumstance which had a great influence on the form that this unification took. Each of them in fashioning its constitution had adopted the peculiarly British idea of a Cabinet with a joint responsibility to an elected legislature of which the Ministers are members. Thus there is always in each of the Dominions a Prime Minister who possesses the confidence and support of a majority in its Parliament and can speak for its people as a whole. This has given an increasing weight to the conferences of Colonial Premiers which have met from time to time in London. The first of these were held mainly because representatives of the Colonies (as they were then called) chanced to be in London for other purposes: in 1887 and 1897 for the two Jubilee celebrations of Queen Victoria, and in 1902 for the coronation of King Edward VII. They were called "Colonial § 232 Conferences," were presided over by the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and achieved nothing in particular. The prevailing attitude of the overseas statesmen was opposition to the surrender of any part of their highly prized independence for the sake of common action. But in 1902 a new conception of the idea of the Empire was displayed in the very style of Edward VII as King "of the Dominions Beyond the Seas" as well as "of Great Britain and Ireland." The accession of the Liberals to office in 1906, too, had a very different effect from what had been expected by their opponents; for it was during the next few years that the idea of a British Commonwealth of Nations took a definite shape. In 1907 the Dominion Premiers were for the first time specially

summoned to London; the meeting was now called "The Imperial Conference," and was presided over by the British Prime Minister; it came to decisions of the highest importance, which were fully discussed in the separate Parliaments; it provided for future meetings every four years, and established a permanent organisation and secretariat.

The chief matter on the agenda for the first Imperial Conference was Defence. It recommended the establishment of an Imperial General Staff and made arrangements to ensure co-operation in war—arrangements which bore precious fruit in the World War. At the Second Conference in 1911 the Premiers were admitted to full knowledge of the policy that was being pursued by the Foreign Office; and the fact that they had been thus consulted was also highly advantageous when the crisis came some three years later. Other matters in which common action was taken were the laws as to naturalisation and as to copyright.

Thus the British Commonwealth of Nations gave an example to the world of how independent States can and should co-operate for their mutual advantage and protection without in the least sacrificing the independent and autonomous nationhood of each.

§ 250. The Suppressed Nationalities.—Any tendency to an exaggerated complacency at these developments was checked by evidence that the Empire included races as discontented with British rule as the Greeks had been with Turkish or the Italians had been with the Austrian. We had always supported the uprising of this national spirit elsewhere, and it was somewhat disconcerting to find our own rule looked on as a foreign tyranny by Egyptians, Indians, and Irishmen.

§ 239 In Egypt it was only after Lord Cromer had brought his long task to an end in 1907 that the symptoms of discontent became serious. The long-continued bickering with France on the subject had now been ended by the Entente, but many members of the educated classes in Egypt felt that by this time the country was ready for constitutional government and the withdrawal of foreign officials, both civil and military. This feeling was fomented by the Pan-Islam movement which was now beginning to unite Mohammedans everywhere, and was encouraging them to assert their equality with Christians and their independence of European culture and tutelage.

But disconcerting as was this cry of "Egypt for the

Egyptians," that of "India for the Indians" was much more so. It had begun with the reforms of Lord Ripon, who had been Viceroy between 1880 and 1884, and had represented in India the Gladstonian traditions that prevailed in the home government during those years. His reforms included the withdrawal of the ban on the vernacular press; the placing of local affairs in the hands of elective district boards for the express purpose of educating Indians in the business of administration; and the establishment of schools in which most of the teaching was done by natives. Encouraged by these concessions the literate castes of the Hindus (a minute proportion of the population) began to meet in annual Congresses, which put forward claims that India should be placed on an equality with the Dominions in relationship with the rest of the Empire. Clearly there were great difficulties in the way of this: fifty millions of Indians were looked on as "untouchable" by the high-caste members at the Congresses; the Pan-Islamic movement had given Indian Moslems quite different aims from those of the Hindus; hardly a tenth of one per cent. of the population of India had any conception of "nationality." Altogether it seemed that in this congeries of races, tongues, and religions there was little material to form a nation-state with parliamentary institutions.

Nevertheless, the agitation has continued with varying intensity, and it was scarcely at all allayed by the reforms instituted by Lord Morley (with Lord Minto as Viceroy) during the period preceding the war. Lord Morley made it plain that he regarded democratic government in the Western sense as impossible for India at present, but he fully recognised the importance of governing the country in accordance with the opinions and desires of the natives. To this end provision was made for Indian statesmen to be members both of the Legislative Council in India and of the Secretary's Council in London.

§ 251. That Upas Tree Again!—But the most serious symptoms of discontent with British rule came from Ireland. The breach in the ranks of the Irish Parliamentary Party had § 220 gradually healed under the leadership of John Redmond; and it was as solid and determined as ever in its demand for Home Rule. Events frequently ran a dismally familiar course. For instance, George Wyndham, Irish Secretary under the Conservative Government, put forward a plan for what was called "Devolution," which was a considerable step in the direction

1906 of autonomy ; but this was repudiated by the Prime Minister (Balfour), and Wyndham resigned. The Irish then turned once more to the Liberals, who had relegated Home Rule to a subordinate place in their "programme," but had never altogether dropped it. The 1906 election made that party completely independent of extraneous aid, and the Governments of Campbell-Bannerman and Asquith were able to leave this thorny problem alone for some years. The struggle with the Peers and the elections of 1911, however, altered the whole situation. The Government's majority was now so small that the support of the Irish members was urgently necessary to its continued existence, and this support it could only obtain by bringing in a Home Rule Bill. Moreover, the Parliament Act, which took away the absolute veto of the House of Lords, removed the one fatal obstacle to such a measure. Accordingly, a third Home Rule Bill was brought in during the Session of 1912. The suspensory veto of the Lords hung it up for three years, but in 1914 the situation became extremely critical. The great majority of the Irish nation was insistent in its claim for autonomy ; and this seemed to be the last opportunity for settling the question by constitutional means, for there was a formidable movement in the country which derided all such tame methods and advocated open rebellion against British rule. Many of the inhabitants of Ulster, on the other hand, were equally determined that in no circumstances would they submit to an Irish Government. Encouraged by the Conservative Party in England, the Ulstermen imported arms and openly began to drill in readiness to resist any attempt to compel them to submit to such a government. The Nationalists of Southern Ireland responded with counter-preparations, and it appeared as if the passing of the Act would be the signal for an appalling Civil War. The King summoned representatives of both sides to a Conference in June, 1914 ; but feeling in Ireland was so white-hot that no compromise was possible : the least concession on the part of the leaders would have been met with passionate repudiation by their followers. Thus the Conference broke up with the difficulty still unsolved, and in July the position was one of extreme tension. There is no doubt that the German Emperor's policy in the latter half of that month was influenced by the idea that the Irish trouble would altogether preclude Britain's taking any part in a European War.

In this he made a grievous error. Soon after the war broke out it was agreed that the Home Rule Bill should be passed into law, with the proviso that it should not be put into operation until such time as an amending Bill had been passed to exclude Northern Ireland from the jurisdiction of the Dublin Parliament. Worse days were to come for the country than ever, but they fall outside the date when this History closes; and it must suffice here to note that the solution ultimately found was to grant Ireland "Dominion status" with the constitutional position of Canada expressly mentioned as a model—a far more complete form of autonomy than Gladstone or Parnell had ever contemplated.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Compare the Roman Empire, the German Empire, the United States, and the British Commonwealth: (a) as to the history of their formation; (b) as to their constitutional position.
2. Suggest a solution for the problem of Indian government.
3. What are the limits of legitimate resistance to the law of the land (exemplified by Passive Resistance, Suffragettes, and Ulstermen)?
4. Do you consider that subsequent history justified or condemned Gladstone's adoption of Home Rule?



## CHAPTER XLIII

### Milestones to Armageddon

"Prepare, prepare the iron helm of war,  
Bring forth the lots, cast in the spacious orb;  
The Angel of Fate turns them with mighty hands  
And casts them out upon the darkened earth—  
Prepare, prepare!"

BLAKE.

"Great commotions arise out of small things, but not because of small things."—ARISTOTLE.

Now that we have come to the last chapter in this book—the events that immediately led to the World War—we are able to appreciate the essential unity that holds together the period it covers. We began by describing the Economic Revolution that marked the commencement of modern Industrialism, and the French Revolution that led to modern Nationalism. We traced the development of these two forces side by side through the century; and we now see that by the end of it they have coalesced to bring into existence that remarkable phenomenon, the Industrial State. In 1815 men were mainly concerned about such matters as the Parliamentary franchise; in 1914 they were concerned about their country getting control of markets and raw material, the two coefficients of industrial expansion. It is not sentimental "rights" so much as material "interests" that form the chief concern of mankind in our day. This was the foundation of that Imperialism that became the dominant motive in European politics during the last two decades of the nineteenth century. It was the search for fields for economic exploitation that caused the nations to squabble about Northern Africa, that impelled the Central Powers to the *Drang nach Osten*, that caused British South Africa to be expanded to the Lakes, that drove Japan into her wars with China and with Russia. "That Government deserves most of popular approval which does most to increase our trade," said Joseph Chamberlain in

1896; and the words might have come from any European statesman of the epoch.

Side by side with Imperialism, and not unconnected with it, there spread a gospel of ruthless egoism, both personal and national. "My country, whether right or wrong," slips naturally into "What I want, whether right or wrong." This doctrine reached its highest expression in the writings of the German philosopher Nietzsche, with his doctrine of "The Will to Power," and its intensest practical development in the actions of the German Emperor, William II, with his invasion of Belgium.

§ 252. The First Milestone : Algeciras.—We have seen how the unfriendly attitude of Germany during the Boer War and the rapid development of the German Navy at about the same time had awakened Britain out of her pleasant dream of "a sleeping partnership" with that country, and had led to an abandonment of that "splendid isolation" which had been her boast for so long. The Anglo-French understanding was extremely distasteful to the "Pan-German" party that dominated the counsels of the Kaiser; and that party took particular umbrage at the compromise which left the French Government supreme in Morocco in return for a similar con- § 239  
cession to the British in Egypt. When the Sultan of Morocco complained that French officials were behaving as if the Republic had sovereign rights in his country, and made an appeal to Germany against this domination, the Kaiser eagerly seized the opportunity. He went in person to Tangier, gave the Sultan 1905  
assurances of his support, declared that France had been exceeding her rights under the Treaty of Madrid, and demanded that the Powers that had made that treaty should meet in conference and discuss the situation *ab initio*. His tone was so decided, not to say minatory, that France was intimidated. The prestige of her army had recently been dimmed by scandals and intrigues; her ally Russia had been temporarily knocked out by the disastrous war with Japan and by an incipient revolution at § 238  
home; and, moreover, she had not a good case. The French Government, therefore, agreed to the Conference, although this involved the resignation of the Foreign Minister, Delcassé, who had been responsible for the "forward" policy in Morocco (he had also been one of the authors of the Entente with Britain). This was a decided diplomatic rebuff for France, but

Jan.  
1906

a secondary object of Germany's blow was to put a severe and testing strain on the Entente itself, just at the moment when the British Cabinet responsible for it was falling from power. By the time the Conference met at Algeciras in Southern Spain a Liberal Foreign Secretary had succeeded Lord Lansdowne, but it immediately became clear that this would make no change in Britain's Foreign Policy. Sir Edward Grey stood by France, and this brought about the defeat of German aims at the Conference. The Kaiser had to accept a worthless concession on the Congo in lieu of his Moroccan claims.

This was the first distinct step towards the World War. It crystallised the Entente; it made the French Government and people realise their danger, and set them upon an active re-organisation of their army; and it disgusted the Pan-Germans, making them eager for an opportunity to be avenged upon the Entente Powers for the rebuff.

1906-  
1914

§ 253. Haldane and Army Reform.—Disillusionment awaited the German hope that the traditional "pacificism" of the Liberal Party would weaken the Foreign Policy and the fighting forces of Great Britain. The responsibility of office always tends to minimise drastic changes in policy; and moreover, there was a strong element in the new Cabinet which was decidedly "Imperialistic." Certainly, the Prime Minister, Campbell-Bannerman, represented the old-fashioned Liberalism that called for an unaggressive policy and retrenchment in national expenditure, especially in armaments; but in the course of the next eight years the Liberal Government doubled the Naval Estimates, turned the army into a force expressly designed for an expedition on the Continent, raised taxation to heights hitherto undreamt of, and landed the country in the greatest war in history.

One of the most "Imperialistic" members of the Cabinet was R. B. Haldane, the Secretary of State for War. The South African War had disclosed lamentable weaknesses in military organisation; and recent departures in Foreign Policy had made it incumbent upon the Government to fit the army for quite a new purpose. Instead of merely garrisoning India with interludes of warfare against half-savage natives of Asia and Africa, it must henceforth be able to take its place at a moment's notice alongside our new allies in the (as yet unlikely) contingency of our being drawn into a great European war. Lord Roberts was agitating in favour of some sort of conscription to meet the

new dangers, but the nation as a whole refused to respond to the call. Haldane's task was therefore limited to the creation of a mobile self-contained striking force, limited in numbers, but of the highest professional efficiency, fit to go anywhere and do anything. The "Expeditionary Force" was to consist of six infantry divisions with one cavalry division and a complete equipment of specialist corps. At the back of this was to be a Territorial Army, in which the old Volunteers and Yeomanry were to be incorporated. This was intended primarily for Home Defence when the Expeditionary Force should have been called overseas, but might itself be used to support that force should necessity arise. It was organised in fourteen divisions, and was brought into much closer touch with the Regular Army than the Volunteers had been. The Expeditionary Force, the Territorial Force, the Militia and the Officers' Training Corps all fell into their places in a complete scheme for national defence. So far from being a source of expense, the new system cost less than the old one which had been found wanting in the South African War.

§ 254. Two more Milestones : Bosnia and Agadir.—In the summer of 1908 a revolution at Constantinople threw political power in Turkey into the hands of a party of vigorous young men who seemed likely to make the Turkish domination over the Balkans a much more real thing than it had been for many years past. This would have been a distinct check to that *Drang nach Osten* by which the Central Powers were seeking to bring the Balkan Peninsula under their own control. One of the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin had placed two small Serbian provinces, 1878 Bosnia and Herzegovina, under the "protection" of Austria. In order to forestall the revival of Turkish influence in them, the Emperor of Austria now suddenly announced that he had 1908 decided to annex them. Serbia was bitterly aggrieved at this wanton aggression of a German Power upon Slavic provinces, and the Pan-Slav movement in Russia was roused to such a pitch of warlike indignation that it looked as if the long-expected European War for the domination of the Balkans was about to break out. But the Kaiser strode down to the footlights "in shining armour" (as he himself put it) and warned the Czar that unless he himself advised the Serbian Government to submit to the annexation of the provinces, Austria would make war on Russia with the full support of Germany.

Once more the question arose : What line will England take ?

1897

France had just succeeded, by a masterpiece of diplomacy, in getting Britain to settle her long-standing grievances against Russia (connected chiefly with Persia and Afghanistan). British statesmen were reluctant to enter into close relations with a benighted autocracy which had just succeeded in defeating all attempts at democratic reform; but the Czar had set up a pretence of Parliamentary Government for their express edification, and the common danger from Germany had cemented the Triple Entente. The British Government now made an emphatic protest against the annexation of the provinces, but it soon showed that it could not regard the question of the precise nature of Austrian control over Bosnia worth the bones of a single British grenadier. So Russia had to submit, and the Junker Party in Germany was triumphant.

Here was another step towards Armageddon. Just as Algeciras had been a warning to France, so the Bosnian episode was a warning to Russia; Pan-Slavism and Pan-Germanism would be in death grips before long, and it behoved her to be ready. Her industrial development had been crippled (largely through the Russophobe policy associated with Palmerston and Disraeli); but she now pushed on her strategic railways with money borrowed from France.

Before many months had passed another long stride was taken by the Powers in the same direction. In June, 1911, Germany suddenly sent the gunboat *Panther* to a village called Agadir on the Atlantic coast of Morocco, under a pretence of protecting German mercantile interests there. The place was practically a desert, and the nature of the "mercantile interests" was not easy to discover. The British Government looked upon the action as a pretext for establishing a coaling-station on the main route to South Africa and South America, and as a direct challenge to Britain's claim to command the sea. Once more the situation came perilously near to war. The German Government was taken aback by the firm and confident tone adopted by Grey, and still more by the words of Lloyd George, whom they had always regarded as a "peace-at-any-price man," who would always be a source of weakness to Britain in her foreign relations. Just when this crisis was at its height he made a speech in the City in the course of which he said: "If a situation were to arise in which peace could only be preserved by the surrender of the great beneficent position Britain has won by centuries of

heroism and achievement . . . then I say emphatically that peace at that price would be a humiliation intolerable for a great country like ours." Would Germany regard these words as an acceptance of the challenge implied by the "Panthersprung"? For weeks the state of tension continued. Then it gradually relaxed, with the sword still undrawn.

§ 255. Forewarned is Forearmed.—This time it was Britain's turn to read a warning in Germany's attitude. To some Englishmen war had seemed inevitable for ten years past; but others remembered that a war with France had seemed equally inevitable § 237 in the 'nineties, yet the danger had passed with time. It was not easy, however, to account for the rapidly accelerating growth of the German navy except as evidence of an intention to make an end of that sea-supremacy on which our very national existence depended. At whom else could it be aimed? For some years we had felt a cheerful confidence that, build as he would, it would take the Kaiser a long time to catch up to us; but in 1906 the launching of the *Dreadnought* altered the whole situation. With the great range of her guns and the great power developed by her engines she made all previous battleships like old iron. The Germans would henceforth be able to start fair in building the only sort of battleship that counted. In the following year something approaching a panic took possession of the British public, and the Government was goaded into laying down eight of these "Dreadnoughts" instead of the usual programme of three or four ordinary battleships. Then self-confidence gradually returned and the agitation died down. The Bosnian episode seemed very remote, and it was only a minority of British statesmen who appreciated the significance of Agadir. Fortunately, amongst this minority was the Prime Minister and some of the leading members of his Cabinet.

Asquith was in a very difficult position, for some of his stoutest supporters in the struggle with the Peers were the old-fashioned Radicals who were resolutely opposed to "swollen armaments." He could not afford to lose that support, but he was equally determined that a war should not find us unprepared. A war would be an appalling catastrophe, and it should be avoided if foresight and forbearance could contrive. But if it came it must find us ready to take our own part. The final polish was put on the Expeditionary Force; the necessary arrangements were made for its shipment across the Channel; the chiefs of

the French army were consulted and elaborate plans made for co-operation with them. The Imperial General Staff discussed the question whether the force should fight alongside the French or should be kept back to harass the enemy's flank when he made his expected attack through Belgium; and the former plan was finally decided on. Winston Churchill, appointed First Lord of the Admiralty in the October of the Agadir year, took great risks to give the battleships now laid down an overwhelming strength. Fifteen-inch guns were adopted without any test of their practicability being possible; oil-fuel was adopted to give space and increased engine-power; great oil-tanks were constructed to hold a two years' supply of fuel, and a controlling interest gained in the Anglo-Persian Oil Company; two new naval ports were made on the east coast in view of the fact that Britain's front had now changed since the days when France was the enemy.

But all this time the Government scrupulously avoided any bellicose word or gesture. It still hoped that the crisis might be lived down; and it even went so far as to propose a "naval holiday" to the Kaiser, a suggestion that the two Governments should come to an agreement to make a proportionate reduction in ship-building. The Kaiser at first seemed to be delighted at the project, but the wretched man was in the clutches of his "Junker" party, and nothing came of it. Even after this significant failure the British Government refrained from all provocation, and from any word or act that might arouse a war spirit in the nation.

§ 256. The Fourth Milestone : Bucharest.—In 1912 the independent Balkan States made a united effort to drive the Turks out of the Peninsula, as a result of which Serbia hoped to get a strip of Adriatic coast as her share of the spoils (for her lack of any outlet to the sea had hitherto been a fatal bar to her economic development). The sweeping victory of the allies was a severe check to the Pan-German policy, and Austria at once stepped in with an announcement that in no circumstances would she allow Serbia to acquire a port on the Adriatic. Thereupon Serbia suggested to Bulgaria that some substitute should be found for her on the *Ægean*. Bulgaria's reply was a treacherous attack on her late ally at the instigation of the Austrians; but she was herself attacked by Roumania, and the result of this Second Balkan War was the complete defeat of

the Bulgars leading to the Treaty of Bucharest, which greatly enhanced the position of Serbia, and gave her the use of Salonika as a seaport.

These events led directly into the World War. A strong and self-confident Serbia would be a buttress for Pan-Slavism, and a stumbling block to all Teutonic designs in the Near East. The Central Powers argued out the situation between themselves thus: Austria must crush Serbia before she gets any stronger; Russia will assuredly come to the aid of her fellow Slavs—but then Germany will come to the aid of Austria; and if that involves a war with France too—well, let it! War has become necessary for Austro-German economic expansion. The Slavs must be beaten to clear the way for the *Drang nach Osten*, and § 168 the French colonies would be nearly as useful as the Near East as fields for economic exploitation. Moreover, there is the alarming growth of the anti-militarist Social-Democratic Party at home—they polled more than a third of the votes at the recent election (1912); this formidable proletariat must be diverted against another foe. But how about England? Is she not also a member of the Entente? Well, it must be admitted that a war with England would be another matter; but there is no fear of that—she is nearly as degenerate as France, her Ministers have no fight in them, and in any case she is on the brink of civil war in Ireland—and she can't even control her "Suffragettes"!

§ 257. The World Crisis.—From now onwards the Central 1913- Powers hurried on their plans for the war. Kultur was to achieve 1914 what it had achieved in 1865 and in 1870. Devastating siege § 168 guns were designed to batter down the fortresses on which the French and Belgians were relying. A complete train schedule was drawn up for an attack through Belgium to turn the flank of the French army. The fall of Paris was timed for the fourth week from the declaration of war. There would be plenty of time after that to turn eastwards and fall on the Russian armies, which would probably be still in the throes of mobilisation. Everything pointed to the latter half of 1914 as a suitable time to put this programme into operation. By then the new Army Law would be in full operation, the special Levy on Capital would have been collected, and the deepening of the Kiel Canal to float the Super-Dreadnoughts would have been completed.

A pretext for the actual declaration of war? Whether by accident or design, the Archduke Francis Ferdinand (who was



a peculiarly unsuitable heir to the Austrian throne from the Pan-German point of view) was sent to the capital of Bosnia—a hotbed of Pan-Slavism—at the time of a Serbian national festival there, and was left with practically no police protection. The inevitable followed, and the assassination at Sarajevo was made the pretext for precipitating the conflict. The unfortunate Archduke was duly murdered on June 28th; Austria presented her ultimatum to Serbia, demanding humiliating penance for the misdeed, on July 23rd; the reply not being considered sufficiently abject, Austria declared war on Serbia on July 28th; Russia came to the support of Serbia on July 31st; Germany declared war on Russia on August 1st, and two days later Germany was at war with France.

Once more, and far more anxiously than ever before, arises the momentous question: What will Britain do? Upon that depended the future of mankind. During this fatal week Sir Edward Grey was in a very difficult position. He strove to induce the Powers to suspend hostilities and see if it were not possible to come to an agreement about the not very momentous question of the responsibility of the Serbian Government for the murders at Sarajevo; but the truth of Aristotle's words quoted at the head of this chapter at once became apparent. The forces that were impelling the nations into conflict went deep down below the surface, and were now utterly irresistible. Grey "sat on the fence" as long as he possibly could, for he realised that if he declared unequivocally that England would support the Entente (to do which she was under no obligation written or implied), this would encourage Russia to precipitate a general war; if, on the other hand, he declared that England would remain neutral, Germany would be encouraged to strike while the position was thus favourable to her. Moreover, the very indefiniteness of our obligations to France were an additional source of embarrassment. She had withdrawn most of her warships from the Channel to the Mediterranean, so as to allow the British Navy to concentrate in home waters to watch the German fleet. It seemed impossible that in these circumstances we should look on while the German ships steamed down the Channel and attacked the French coasts. And yet, what had we to do with the rivalries of Teuton and Slav in the Balkans?

The Cabinet met on Sunday, August 2nd, but its actions were hampered by a lack of unanimity among its members, and by

the necessity it would be under of justifying a declaration of war to Parliament and to the nation at large, which had been kept in ignorance of what had been going on behind the scenes during the past few years, and which was merely startled and puzzled by the sudden rush of dramatic events on the Continent.

Next day came news of the German violation of Belgium. A treacherous attack on a small State, the repudiation at will of treaty obligations, the prospect of Germany getting a grip on Ostend and Antwerp—these facts removed all doubts in the nation's mind. The Government had the whole British people at its back when it sent a stringent ultimatum on the subject of Belgian neutrality. The time limit of that ultimatum expired at 11 o'clock on the night of August 4th. As Big Ben chimed out the hour, the dimly apprehended portent of war was unloosed, and for Britain as for the rest of the world a new era began.

#### SUBJECTS FOR DISCUSSION

1. Trace the causes of the World War back to the twin Revolutions described at the beginning of this book.
2. The Germans said that they were compelled to go to war to break through the ring of hostile states that was surrounding them. How far was this true?
3. The history of the Eastern Question, 1820–1914.
4. The shade of Bismarck visits the ex-Kaiser in exile.
5. Was the British Government justified in keeping the public in the dark as to the danger of war?



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